

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was in the fourth year of my apprenticeship to Joe, and it was a Saturday night. There was a group assembled round the fire at the Three Jolly Bargemen, attentive to Mr. Wopsle as he read the newspaper aloud. Of that group, I was one.

A highly popular murder had been committed, and Mr. Wopsle was imbrued in blood to the eyebrows. He gloated over every abhorrent adjective in the description, and identified himself with every witness at the Inquest. He faintly moaned, "I am done for," as the victim, and he barbarously bellowed, "I'll serve you out," as the murderer. He gave the medical testimony, in pointed imitation of our local practitioner; and he piped and shook, as the aged turnpike-keeper who had heard blows, to an extent so very paralytic as to suggest a doubt regarding the mental competency of that witness. The coroner, in Mr. Wopsle's hands, became Timon of Athens; the beadle, Coriolanus. He enjoyed himself thoroughly, and we all enjoyed ourselves, and were delightfully comfortable. In this cosy state of mind we came to the verdict Wilful Murder.

Then, and not sooner, I became aware of a strange gentleman leaning over the back of the settle opposite me, looking on. There was an expression of contempt on his face, and he bit the side of a great forefinger as he watched the group of faces. "Well!" said the stranger to Mr. Wopsle, when the reading was done, "you have settled it all to your own satisfaction, I have no doubt?"

Everybody started and looked up, as if it were the murderer. He looked at everybody coldly and sarcastically.

"Guilty, of course?" said he. "Out with it. Come!"

"Sir," returned Mr. Wopsle, "without having the honour of your acquaintance, I do say Guilty." Upon this, we all took courage to unite in a confirmatory murmur.

"I know you do," said the stranger; "I knew you would. I told you so. But now I'll ask you a question. Do you know, or do you not know, that the law of England supposes

every man to be innocent, until he is proved—proved—to be guilty?"

"Sir," Mr. Wopsle began to reply, "as an Englishman myself, I—"

"Come!" said the stranger, biting his forefinger at him. "Don't evade the question. Either you know it, or you don't know it. Which is it to be?"

He stood with his head on one side and himself on one side in a bullying interrogative manner, and he threw his forefinger at Mr. Wopsle—as it were to mark him out—before biting it again.

"Now!" said he. "Do you know it, or don't you know it?"

"Certainly I know it," replied Mr. Wopsle.

"Certainly you know it. Then why didn't you say so at first? Now, I'll ask you another question;" taking possession of Mr. Wopsle, as if he had a right to him. "Do you know that none of these witnesses have yet been cross-examined?"

Mr. Wopsle was beginning, "I can only say—" when the stranger stopped him.

"What? You won't answer the question, yes or no? Now, I'll try you again." Throwing his finger at him again. "Attend to me. Are you aware, or are you not aware, that none of these witnesses have yet been cross-examined? Come, I only want one word from you. Yes, or no?"

Mr. Wopsle hesitated, and we all began to conceive rather a poor opinion of him.

"Come!" said the stranger, "I'll help you. You don't deserve help, but I'll help you. Look at that paper you hold in your hand. What is it?"

"What is it?" repeated Mr. Wopsle, eyeing it, much at a loss.

"Is it," pursued the stranger in his most sarcastic and suspicious manner, "the printed paper you have just been reading from?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Undoubtedly. Now, turn to that paper, and tell me whether it distinctly states that the prisoner expressly said that his legal advisers instructed him altogether to reserve his defence?"

"I read that just now," Mr. Wopsle pleaded.

"Never mind what you read just now, sir; I don't ask you what you read. You may read the Lord's Prayer backwards, if you like—and, perhaps, have done it before to-day. Turn to

the paper. No, no, no, my friend; not to the top of the column; you know better than that; to the bottom, to the bottom." (We all began to think Mr. Wopsle full of subterfuge.) "Well? Have you found it?"

"Here it is," said Mr. Wopsle.

"Now, follow that passage with your eye, and tell me whether it distinctly states that the prisoner expressly said that he was instructed by his legal advisers wholly to reserve his defence? Come! Do you make that of it?"

Mr. Wopsle answered, "Those are not the exact words."

"Not the exact words!" repeated the gentleman, bitterly. "Is that the exact substance?"

"Yes," said Mr. Wopsle.

"Yes!" repeated the stranger, looking round at the rest of the company with his right hand extended towards the witness, Wopsle. "And now I ask you what you say to the conscience of that man who, with that passage before his eyes, can lay his head upon his pillow after having pronounced a fellow-creature guilty, unheard?"

We all began to suspect that Mr. Wopsle was not the man we had thought him, and that he was beginning to be found out.

"And that same man, remember," pursued the gentleman, throwing his finger at Mr. Wopsle heavily; "that same man might be summoned as a juryman upon this very trial, and, having thus deeply committed himself, might return to the bosom of his family and lay his head upon his pillow, after deliberately swearing that he would well and truly try the issue joined between Our Sovereign Lord the King and the prisoner at the bar, and would a true verdict give according to the evidence, so help him God!"

We were all deeply persuaded that the unfortunate Wopsle had gone too far, and had better stop in his reckless career while there was yet time.

The strange gentleman, with an air of authority not to be disputed, and with a manner expressive of knowing something secret about every one of us that would effectually do for each individual if he chose to disclose it, left the back of the settle, and came into the space between the two settles, in front of the fire, where he remained standing: his left hand in his pocket, and he biting the forefinger of his right.

"From information I have received," said he, looking round at us as we all quailed before him, "I have reason to believe there is a blacksmith among you, by name Joseph—or Joe—Gargery. Which is the man?"

"Here is the man," said Joe.

The strange gentleman beckoned him out of his place, and Joe went.

"You have an apprentice," pursued the stranger, "commonly known as Pip? Is he here?"

"I am here!" I cried.

The stranger did not recognise me, but I recognised him as the gentleman I had met on

the stairs, on the occasion of my second visit to Miss Havisham. His appearance was too remarkable for me to have forgotten. I had known him the moment I saw him looking over the settle, and now that I stood confronting him with his hand upon my shoulder, I checked off again in detail, his large head, his dark complexion, his deep-set eyes, his bushy black eyebrows, his large watch-chain, his strong black dots of beard and whisker, and even the smell of scented soap on his great hand.

"I wish to have a private conference with you two," said he, when he had surveyed me at his leisure. "It will take a little time. Perhaps we had better go to your place of residence. I prefer not to anticipate my communication, here; you will impart as much or as little of it as you please to your friends afterwards; I have nothing to do with that."

Amidst a wondering silence, we three walked out of the Jolly Bargemen, and in a wondering silence walked home. While going along, the strange gentleman occasionally looked at me, and occasionally bit the side of his finger. As we neared home, Joe vaguely acknowledging the occasion as an impressive and ceremonious one, went on ahead to open the front door. Our conference was held in the state-parlour, which was feebly lighted by one candle.

It began with the strange gentleman's sitting down at the table, drawing the candle to him, and looking over some entries in his pocket-book. He then put up the pocket-book and set the candle a little aside: after peering round it into the darkness at Joe and me, to ascertain which was which.

"My name," he said, "is Jaggers, and I am a lawyer in London. I am pretty well known. I have unusual business to transact with you, and I commence by explaining that it is not of my originating. If my advice had been asked, I should not have been here. It was not asked, and you see me here. What I have to do, as the confidential agent of another, I do. No less, no more."

Finding that he could not see us very well from where he sat, he got up, and threw one leg over the back of a chair and leaned upon it; thus having one foot on the seat of the chair, and one foot on the ground.

"Now, Joseph Gargery, I am the bearer of an offer to relieve you of this young fellow your apprentice. You would not object to cancel his indentures, at his request and for his good? You would not want anything for so doing?"

"Lord forbid that I should want anything for not standing in Pip's way!" said Joe, staring.

"Lord forbidding is pious, but not to the purpose," returned Mr. Jaggers. "The question is, Would you want anything? Do you want anything?"

"The answer is," returned Joe, sternly, "No."

I thought Mr. Jaggers glanced at Joe, as if he considered him a fool for his disinterestedness. But I was too much bewildered between

breathless curiosity and surprise, to be sure of it.

"Very well," said Mr. Jaggers. "Recollect the admission you have made, and don't try to go from it presently."

"Who's a going to try?" retorted Joe.

"I don't say anybody is. Do you keep a dog?"

"Yes, I do keep a dog."

"Bear in mind then, that Brag is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better. Bear that in mind, will you?" repeated Mr. Jaggers, shutting his eyes and nodding his head at Joe, as if he were forgiving him something. "Now, I return to this young fellow. And the communication I have got to make is, that he has great expectations."

Joe and I gasped, and looked at one another.

"I am instructed to communicate to him," said Mr. Jaggers, throwing his finger at me, sideways, "that he will come into a handsome property. Further, that it is the desire of the present possessor of that property, that he be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman—in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations."

My dream was out; my wild fancy was surpassed by sober reality; Miss Havisham was going to make my fortune on a grand scale.

"Now, Mr. Pip," pursued the lawyer, "I address the rest of what I have to say, to you. You are to understand first, that it is the request of the person from whom I take my instructions, that you always bear the name of Pip. You will have no objection, I dare say, to your great expectations being encumbered with that easy condition. But if you have any objection, this is the time to mention it."

My heart was beating so fast, and there was such a singing in my ears, that I could scarcely stammer I had no objection.

"I should think not! Now you are to understand secondly, Mr. Pip, that the name of the person who is your liberal benefactor remains a profound secret, until the person chooses to reveal it. I am empowered to mention that it is the intention of the person to reveal it at first hand by word of mouth to yourself. When that intention may be carried out, I cannot say; no one can say. It may be years hence. Now, you are distinctly to understand that you are most positively prohibited from making any inquiry on this head, or any allusion or reference, however distant, to any individual whomsoever as the individual in all the communications you may have with me. If you have a suspicion in your own breast, keep that suspicion in your own breast. It is not the least to the purpose what the reasons of this prohibition are; they may be the strongest and gravest reasons, or they may be mere whim. That is not for you to inquire into. The condition is laid down. Your acceptance of it, and your observance of it as binding, is the only remaining condition that I am charged with, by the person from whom I take my instructions,

and for whom I am not otherwise responsible. That person is the person from whom you derive your expectations, and the secret is solely held by that person and by me. Again, not a very difficult condition with which to encumber such a rise in fortune; but if you have any objection to it, this is the time to mention it. Speak out."

Once more, I stammered with difficulty that I had no objection.

"I should think not! Now, Mr. Pip, I have done with stipulations." Though he called me Mr. Pip, and began rather to make up to me, he still could not get rid of a certain air of bullying suspicion; and even now he occasionally shut his eyes and threw his finger at me while he spoke, as much as to express that he knew all kinds of things to my disparagement, if he only chose to mention them. "We come next, to mere details of arrangement. You must know that, although I have used the term 'expectations' more than once, you are not endowed with expectations only. There is already lodged in my hands, a sum of money amply sufficient for your suitable education and maintenance. You will please consider me your guardian. Oh!" for I was going to thank him, "I tell you at once, I am paid for my services, or I shouldn't render them. It is considered that you must be better educated in accordance with your altered position, and that you will be alive to the importance and necessity of at once entering on that advantage."

I said I had always longed for it.

"Never mind what you have always longed for, Mr. Pip," he retorted; "keep to the record. If you long for it now, that's enough. Am I answered that you are ready to be placed at once, under some proper tutor? Is that it?"

I stammered, yes, that was it.

"Good. Now, your inclinations are to be consulted. I don't think that wise, mind, but it's my trust. Have you ever heard of any tutor whom you would prefer to another?"

I had never heard of any tutor but Biddy and Mr. Wopsle's great aunt; so, I replied in the negative.

"There is a certain tutor, of whom I have some knowledge, who I think might suit the purpose," said Mr. Jaggers. "I don't recommend him, observe; because I never recommend anybody. The gentleman I speak of, is one Mr. Matthew Pocket."

Ah! I caught at the name directly. Miss Havisham's relation. The Matthew whom Mr. and Mrs. Camilla had spoken of. The Matthew whose place was to be at Miss Havisham's head, when she lay dead, in her bride's dress on the bride's table.

"You know the name?" said Mr. Jaggers, looking shrewdly at me, and then shutting up his eyes while he waited for my answer.

My answer was, that I had heard of the name.

"Oh!" said he. "You have heard of the name. But the question is, what do you say of it?"

I said, or tried to say, that I was much obliged to him for his recommendation—

"No, my young friend!" he interrupted, shaking his great head very slowly. "Recollect yourself!"

Not recollecting myself, I began again that I was much obliged to him for his recommendation—

"No, my young friend," he interrupted, shaking his head and frowning and smiling both at once; "no, no, no; it's very well done but it won't do; you are too young to fix me with it. Recommendation is not the word, Mr. Pip. Try another."

Correcting myself, I said that I was much obliged to him for his mention of Mr. Matthew Pocket—

"That's more like it!" cried Mr. Jaggers.

—And (I added), I would gladly try that gentleman.

"Good. You had better try him in his own house. The way shall be prepared for you, and you can see his son first, who is in London. When will you come to London?"

I said (glancing at Joe, who stood looking on motionless), that I supposed I could come directly.

"First," said Mr. Jaggers, "you should have some new clothes to come in, and they should not be working clothes. Say this day week. You'll want some money. Shall I leave you twenty guineas?"

He produced a long purse, with the greatest coolness, and counted them out on the table and pushed them over to me. This was the first time he had taken his leg from the chair. He sat astride of the chair when he had pushed the money over, and sat swinging his purse and eyeing Joe.

"Well, Joseph Gargery? You look dumfounded?"

"I am!" said Joe, in a very decided manner.

"It was understood that you wanted nothing for yourself, remember?"

"It were understood," said Joe. "And it are understood. And it ever will be similar according."

"But what," said Mr. Jaggers, swinging his purse, "what if it was in my instructions to make you a present, as compensation?"

"As compensation what for?" Joe demanded.

"For the loss of his services."

Joe laid his hand upon my shoulder with the touch of a woman. I have often thought him since, like the steam-hammer, that can crush a man or pat an eggshell, in his combination of strength with gentleness. "Pip is that hearty welcome," said Joe, "to go free with his services to honour and fortune, as no words can tell him. But if you think as Money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child—what came to the forge—and ever the best of friends!"

O dear good Joe, whom I was so ready to leave and so unthankful to, I see you again, with your muscular blacksmith's arm before your eyes, and your broad chest heaving, and

your voice dying away. O dear good faithful tender Joe, I feel the loving tremble of your hand upon my arm, as solemnly this day as if it had been the rustle of an angel's wing!

But I encouraged Joe at the time. I was lost in the mazes of my future fortunes, and could not retrace the by-paths we had trodden together. I begged Joe to be comforted, for (as he said) we had ever been the best of friends, and (as I said) we ever would be so. Joe scooped his eyes with his disengaged wrist, as if he were bent on gouging himself, but said not another word.

Mr. Jaggers had looked on at this, as one who recognised in Joe the village idiot and in me his keeper. When it was over, he said, weighing in his hand the purse he had ceased to swing:

"Now, Joseph Gargery, I warn you this is your last chance. No half measures with me. If you mean to take a present that I have it in charge to make you, speak out, and you shall have it. If on the contrary you mean to say—" Here, to his great amazement he was stopped by Joe's suddenly working round him with every demonstration of a fell pugilistic purpose.

"Which I meantsay," cried Joe, "that if you come into my place bull-baiting and badgering me, come out! Which I meantsay as such if you're a man, come on! Which I meantsay that what I say, I meantsay and stand or fall by!"

I drew Joe away, and he immediately became placable; merely stating to me, in an obliging manner and as a polite expostulatory notice to anyone whom it might happen to concern, that he were not a going to be bull-baited and badgered in his own place. Mr. Jaggers had risen when Joe demonstrated, and had backed to near the door. Without evincing any inclination to come in again, he there delivered his valedictory remarks. They were these.

"Well, Mr. Pip, I think the sooner you leave here—as you are to be a gentleman—the better. Let it stand for this day week, and you shall receive my printed address in the mean time. You can take a hackney-coach at the stage coach-office in London, and come straight to me. Understand that I express no opinion, one way or other, on the trust I undertake. I am paid for undertaking it, and I do so. Now, understand that, finally. Understand that!"

He was throwing his finger at both of us, and I think would have gone on, but for his seeming to think Joe dangerous, and going off.

Something came into my head which induced me to run after him, as he was going down to the Jolly Bargemen where he had left a hired carriage.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Jaggers."

"Halloa!" said he, facing round, "what's the matter?"

"I wish to be quite right, Mr. Jaggers, and to keep to your directions; so I thought I had better ask. Would there be any objection to my taking leave of any one I know, about here, before I go away?"

"No," said he, looking as if he hardly understood me.

"I don't mean in the village only, but up town?"

"No," said he. "No objection."

I thanked him and ran home again, and there I found that Joe had already locked the front door, and vacated the state-parlour, and was seated by the kitchen fire with a hand on each knee, gazing intently at the burning coals. I too sat down before the fire and gazed at the coals, and nothing was said for a long time.

My sister was in her cushioned chair in her corner, and Biddy sat at her needlework before the fire, and Joe sat next Biddy, and I sat next Joe in the corner opposite my sister. The more I looked into the glowing coals, the more incapable I became of looking at Joe; the longer the silence lasted, the more unable I felt to speak.

At length I got out, "Joe, have you told Biddy?"

"No, Pip," returned Joe, still looking at the fire, and holding his knees tight, as if he had private information that they intended to make off somewhere, "which I left it to yourself, Pip."

"I would rather you told, Joe."

"Pip's a gentleman of fortun' then," said Joe, "and God bless him in it!"

Biddy dropped her work and looked at me. Joe held his knees and looked at me. I looked at both of them. After a pause, they both heartily congratulated me; but there was a certain touch of sadness in their congratulations that I rather resented.

I took it upon myself to impress Biddy (and through Biddy, Joe) with the grave obligation I considered my friends under, to know nothing and say nothing about the maker of my fortune. It would all come out in good time, I observed, and in the mean while nothing was to be said save that I had come into great expectations from a mysterious patron. Biddy nodded her head thoughtfully at the fire as she took up her work again, and said she would be very particular; and Joe, still detaining his knees, said, "Ay, ay, I'll be ekervally partickler, Pip;" and then they congratulated me again, and went on to express so much wonder at the notion of my being a gentleman, that I didn't half like it.

Infinite pains were then taken by Biddy to convey to my sister some idea of what had happened. To the best of my belief, those efforts entirely failed. She laughed and nodded her head a great many times, and even repeated after Biddy the words "Pip" and "Property." But I doubt if they had more meaning in them than an election cry, and I cannot suggest a darker picture of her state of mind.

I never could have believed it without experience, but as Joe and Biddy became more at their cheerful ease again, I became quite gloomy. Dissatisfied with my fortune, of course I could not be; but it is possible that I may have been, without quite knowing it, dissatisfied with myself.

Anyhow, I sat with my elbow on my knee

and my face upon my hand, looking into the fire, as those two talked about my going away, and about what they should do without me, and all that. And whenever I caught one of them looking at me, though never so pleasantly (and they often looked at me—particularly Biddy), I felt offended: as if they were expressing some mistrust of me. Though Heaven knows they never did by word or sign.

At those times I would get up and look out at the door; for our kitchen door opened at once upon the night, and stood open on summer evenings to air the room. The very stars to which I then raised my eyes, I am afraid I took to be but poor and humble stars for glittering on the rustic objects among which I had passed my life.

"Saturday night," said I, when we sat at our supper of bread-and-cheese and beer. "Five more days, and then the day before the day! They'll soon go."

"Yes, Pip," observed Joe, whose voice sounded hollow in his beer mug. "They'll soon go."

"Soon, soon go," said Biddy.

"I have been thinking, Joe, that when I go down town on Monday, and order my new clothes, I shall tell the tailor that I'll come and put them on there, or that I'll have them sent to Mr. Pumblechook's. It would be very disagreeable to be stared at by all the people here."

"Mr. and Mrs. Hubble might like to see you in your new gen-teel figure too, Pip," said Joe, industriously cutting his bread, with his cheese on it, in the palm of his left hand, and glancing at my untasted supper as if he thought of the time when we used to compare slices. "So might Wopsle. And the Jolly Bargemen might take it as a compliment."

"That's just what I don't want, Joe. They would make such a business of it—such a coarse and common business—that I couldn't bear myself."

"Ah, that indeed, Pip!" said Joe. "If you couldn't abear yourself—"

Biddy asked me here, as she sat holding my sister's plate, "Have you thought about when you'll show yourself to Mr. Gargery, and your sister, and me? You will show yourself to us; won't you?"

"Biddy," I returned with some resentment, "you are so exceedingly quick that it's difficult to keep up with you."

("She always were quick," observed Joe.)

"If you had waited another moment, Biddy, you would have heard me say that I shall bring my clothes here in a bundle one evening—most likely on the evening before I go away."

Biddy said no more. Handsomely forgiving her, I soon exchanged an affectionate good night with her and Joe, and went up to bed. When I got into my little room, I sat down and took a long look at it, as a mean little room that I should soon be parted from and raised above, for ever. It was furnished with fresh young remembrances too, and even at the same moment I fell into much the same confused

division of mind between it and the better rooms to which I was going, as I had been in so often between the forge and Miss Havisham's, and Biddy and Estella.

The sun had been shining brightly all day on the roof of my attic, and the room was warm. As I put the window open and stood looking out, I saw Joe come slowly forth at the dark door below, and take a turn or two in the air; and then I saw Biddy come and bring him a pipe and light it for him. He never smoked so late, and it seemed to hint to me that he wanted comforting, for some reason or other.

He presently stood at the door immediately beneath me, smoking his pipe, and Biddy stood there too, quietly talking to him, and I knew that they talked of me, for I heard my name mentioned in an endearing tone by both of them more than once. I would not have listened for more, if I could have heard more: so, I drew away from the window, and sat down in my one chair by the bedside, feeling it very sorrowful and strange that this first night of my bright fortunes should be the loneliest I had ever known.

Looking towards the open window, I saw light wreaths from Joe's pipe floating there, and I fancied it was like a blessing from Joe—not obtruded on me or paraded before me, but pervading the air we shared together. I put my light out, and crept into bed; and it was an uneasy bed now, and I never slept the old sound sleep in it any more.

FLAWS IN CHINA.

ALTHOUGH the Tartars hold the reins of the Chinese government, and are to all intents and purposes masters, imposing their own laws and customs—as witness pigtails and the national costume—yet the Chinese have never absorbed them. They have never thoroughly overlaid the national element, and from time to time the cry of “China for the Chinese!” stirs the national heart of the flowery land. The conqueror and the conquered ever remain as two, and are still only conqueror and conquered. The Tartars have a special quarter assigned to them in most of the towns, and their women have the good taste to eschew the vanity of the “golden water-lilies,” so dear to the heart of the Chinese lady, and keep to their own natural feet, such as God gave them. In many other things of even greater significance the line of demarcation is still broadly drawn.

The present rebellion under Tai-ping, the Prince of Peace, is broadening out that line with terrible decision. As a rising against the foreign possessors of the country, it is a curious transcript of the former national revolt against the Mongolians; and Tai-ping imitates his predecessor Hung-woo as closely as he can, both in his policy and his strategy. So closely do both lines run together, that even in such a matter as that of the general pawning and forfeiture of the Tartars' arms and horses, the present imitates the past. When Hung-

woo put the Mongolians upon their mettle, and they had to muster all their service to meet him, it was found that they had forfeited half their arms and equipments to the Chinese; a fact which somewhat lessened their efficiency when the day of hurry came. And now, at this present moment, the cunning Chinese shopkeepers have in pledge half the horses of the Tartars. We may be sure they will not give up the pawn-tickets easily. Tai-ping, the Prince of Peace, who comes in so stormy a manner to substantiate his claim to that mild title, has proved himself a second Peter the Czar in the matter of costume and hairy growths. He and his followers have cut off their pigtails, and cast away the Tartar tippets, to go back to the long unshaven locks and loose robes opening in front of the time of the Mings. They are welcomed by the real Chinese people everywhere, and they make a marked difference in their treatment of these and of such Tartars as may fall into their hands. To the first they are all humanity and brotherhood; but for the last are reserved such barbarities as only belong to the Chinese intellect to conceive and the Chinese hand to execute. Tai-ping has had various fortunes. His history, as he himself and some of the missionaries desire it to be received, we proceed to tell.

Hung-sin-tshuen, for that is his real name, was born in the year 1813, in a little village, among paddy-fields, about thirty miles from Canton. On a clear day the White Cloud Mountains, rising in the neighbourhood of Canton, may be seen from this village, which numbers no more than about four hundred inhabitants. Most of them belong to the Hung family and descendants of other settlers. They are very poor. Their houses front to the south, in order to profit by the cooling south-east breezes during the hot season, and to avoid the northern blasts of winter. On his birth in this village the new prophet received the name of “Brilliant Fire,” and, after Chinese fashion, when he reached the age of manhood, another, indicating his relation to the Hung family. Later, when he became a scholar, he took for his literary name Sin-tshuen, “Elegant and Perfect.”

Although head man of the village, his father was but poor, possessing only two buffaloes, a few pigs, dogs, and poultry. He and his two elder sons cultivated the paddy-fields, but Sin-tshuen, it is said, showed very soon an extraordinary capacity for study, and was sent to school when seven years of age. He surprised his teachers by his diligence, and several of them refused to take any pay from him; his relatives also assisted him, for they were proud of him, and hoped he would attain high honours. When he was about sixteen his studies ended, for his family was too poor to continue them. The young scholar was then obliged to assist his father and brothers in their field labours, and led often the oxen to graze on the mountain. Then a friend invited him to join for a year in his studies, meaning to pay himself with his help. That year passed by: Sin-tshuen was made schoolmaster of his village. The income of a

Chinese schoolmaster depends on the number of his pupils, but they must not exceed twenty; because it is held that he could not attend to a greater number with the necessary care. Every boy is bound to give his teacher annually the following articles: Rice, 50 lb.; for extra provisions, 300 cash; lamp oil, 1 catty (1½ lb.); lard, 1 catty; salt, 1 catty; tea, 1 catty; and, besides, a sum of from 1½ to 4 dollars, according to the boy's age and ability. The lessons are continued throughout the whole year, with only one month's holidays at the new year, when the engagement of the teacher always terminates, and a new contract must be made.

Sin-tshuen tried for literary honours; on which in China everything depends; but, in Canton, he did not succeed. When he was about twenty-three years old, and again in Canton to try his chance, he met before the house of the Superintendent of Finances a strange fortune-teller dressed in the ancient Chinese costume as it was worn before the conquest of the Tartars, and as it may yet be seen in Cochin-China and upon the stage. The stranger had a coat with wide sleeves, and his hair tied in a knot on his head. He was telling fortunes through an interpreter, and Sin-tshuen drew near to ask whether he would succeed this time in the examination. The man answered his thought before he uttered it, by saying, "You will attain the highest rank; but do not be grieved, for grief will make you sick. I congratulate your virtuous father." The next day he met again two men in the Liang-tsang street, one of whom gave him nine small volumes; being a complete set of a work entitled Good Words for exhorting the Age. Sin-tshuen took these books home to his village, and, after having only superficially glanced at them, laid them aside without further thinking of them.

In the next year, 1837, he went again to Canton for the examination. At first his name was placed high on the board; but afterwards it was again put lower, which misfortune pulled him down so much that he was obliged to engage a sedan and two stout men to carry him back to his native village. There he arrived on the first day of the third Chinese month, and for some time he kept his bed, where he was visited by strange dreams. He saw a great many people, who bade him welcome to their number, and he supposed this to forebode his death. He called his parents and relatives, and said to them, "My days are counted, and my life will soon be closed. O my parents! how badly have I returned the favour of your love to me! I shall never attain a name that may reflect its lustre upon you." When he had said these words, he shut his eyes and fainted; and his two brothers, who had supported him while he spoke, laid him down on the bed, thinking, like all present, that he was dying.

We tell the tale as we gather it from Chinese sources; but the reader will make what allowance he feels to be necessary for imposture. At first, when Sin-tshuen's eyes were closed, he saw a

vision. In it, a dragon, a tiger, a cock, several musicians, a luminous place full of fine men and women, an old woman, a great number of old, virtuous, and venerable men, who take the pains to cut his body open and sew it up again, are mixed in a farrago quite as absurd as the spirit-rapping stories current among the English readers of Spiritual publications. Finally, Sin-tshuen was presented with the emblems of royalty and true exponent of Heaven's will upon earth. The sickness and visions continued, it is said, for forty days. In Sin-tshuen's later dreams he met often with a man of middle age, whom he heard reprove Confucius for having omitted in his books clearly to expound the true doctrine. Confucius seemed to be much ashamed, and owned his guilt.

Often, during his sickness, Sin-tshuen said that he was duly appointed Emperor of China, and was highly gratified when any one so called him; but when people said he was mad he laughed at them, and called them mad themselves. He was soon known in the whole district as the madman; for he frequently performed violent antics, to make believe that he was slaying demons. People came in to look at him when he lay asleep, wearied out by his exertions. His two brothers kept him fastened within doors.

When Sin-tshuen recovered from this sickness, it is said that he was careful in his conduct, friendly and open in his demeanour, his body increased in height and size, his pace became firm and imposing, his views enlarged and liberal. His friend describes him as being, at a later period, a rather tall man, with oval face and fair complexion, high nose, small round ears, his eyes large and bright, his look piercing and difficult to endure, his voice clear and sonorous. When laughing, the whole house resounded. His hair was black, his beard long and sandy, his strength of body extraordinary, his power of understanding rare.

In 1843, Sin-tshuen had a school in a village named Waterlily, ten miles from his native place, where he was engaged as a teacher by the Li family. In that year his cousin Li happened to find in the bookcase of Sin-tshuen the work entitled Good Words for exhorting the Age, given to him at Canton, and laid aside. Li asked what was in it? Sin-tshuen answered that he did not know, and Li took the work home with him. The author of the Good Words exhorting the Age calls himself "Hioh-shen," or "Student of Virtue." The name, however, by which he is commonly called is Liang-afah, known as one of Dr. Milne's Chinese converts. He became himself a missionary, and wrote and printed in the year 1832, nine tracts, of about fifty pages each, which were revised by Dr. Morrison in manuscript, and afterwards printed at Malacca. The general title is as above mentioned, and among the contents are whole chapters of the Bible, according to the translation of Dr. Morrison, many exhortations drawn from single texts, and sundry statements founded upon Scripture.

When Li returned the books to Sin-tshuen,

he said that their contents were very extraordinary. Sin-tshuen, therefore, was induced to read them from beginning to the end, and, it is professed, with growing anxiety, because he found in them the key to his visions! Li became, it is said, as much excited as Sin-tshuen. Learning from the books that it was necessary to be baptised, they performed this rite for each other, and Sin-tshuen "converted and baptised" two of his most intimate friends, Yun-jan, a schoolmaster, and his cousin, Hung-tin, who is the source of all this information on the matter.

Sin-tshuen and Li studied, it is said, in Water-lily, the nine books, and the more they got entangled into the mysteries of the Bible, the more they became excited. They had provided themselves with two swords, weighing nine pounds each, on which were engraved the words, "Sword for the Extermination of Demons." However, even prophets must eat, and having lost all their pupils, the two friends resolved to go to another province as pedlars dealing in Chinese ink and pencil, preaching the new doctrine at the same time.

The wandering prophets procured Hung-tin a place as schoolmaster, which he kept for several years, and in which he "converted" about sixty persons. The others were wandering about, and the reputation of Sin-tshuen spread over the country. In the years 1845 and 1846 he began to think it possible that he might realise his imperial visions. He often spoke about it to Hung-tin, and once he said to him, "God has divided the world into kingdoms and given them the ocean for boundaries, just as a father divides his acres among his sons. Each of them ought to honour the will of his father, and to cultivate in peace his own. Why may now these Tartars break forcibly into China? If God would help me to restore our own, I would teach all people to remain in their property, without injuring or robbing one another; we would keep up a friendly intercourse in communicating to each other the same principles and wisdom; we would worship altogether one and the same heavenly Father, and honour the doctrine of a common heavenly brother, the Saviour of the world. This has been the desire of my heart since that time when my soul was raised to heaven."

Towards the end of 1846 a man came from Canton to Hwa-hien (where Sin-tshuen was then schoolmaster), and said that a foreign missionary, Lo-han (Mr. Roberts), was preaching there the true doctrine. Sin-tshuen and Hung-tin would have gone to Canton at once, but they could not leave their pupils, and the man who brought that news returned alone. He told the missionary of Sin-tshuen, his visions, his influence, and a Chinese assistant of the mission invited Sin-tshuen and Hung-tin to come to Canton. They did so, and received instruction. The Chinese assistant missionaries, however, became soon jealous, and induced Hung-tin to give up the study of theology for that of medicine, and cunningly advised Sin-

tshuen to ask Mr. Roberts for a monthly salary. Mr. Roberts cooled towards Sin-tshuen, refused his request, and postponed also his baptism for an uncertain time. Sin-tshuen therefore left Canton in the middle of the year 1847, with some copper coins in his pocket, fell amongst robbers, and lost even the little that he had. The head magistrate of Shan-king gave him a few pence, and on board a ship he met four merchants, who paid his passage and gave him a couple of shillings. Thus he arrived at last in Thistlehill, where Jung-yun-san had worked for the new doctrine with great success, and the number of his converted amounted to two thousand persons. The arrival of the prophet was hailed with rejoicings. The wife of a respectable man said that when she was ill ten years before, and her soul raised to heaven, an old man told her, "After ten years, a man will come from the east to teach you how to worship God. Follow him."

The new doctrine spread rapidly over the whole province Kwang-si, and even graduates of the first and second order were "converted." There was in Kwang-si a celebrated idol, and the demon inhabiting it was said to be most powerful. When Sin-tshuen heard this, he proceeded to the temple, and destroyed it.

As we were told that after his sickness Sin-tshuen altered for the better, so we are, of course, now told how, after having read the books and become impressed with the idea of himself as a prophet, his demeanour was yet more imposing. His gait was slow and full of dignity; he did not talk much, and laughed rarely. In sitting, his position was erect, leaning neither backwards nor sideways; his hands were resting on his knees, and his feet were a little apart from each other. Thus he would sit for hours.

Thistlehill is described as a place of regular "revival." People fell into convulsions during the religious service, uttering strange exhortations. The teachers themselves were bewildered, but sensible enough to write down the words of those who were "taken by the spirit," leaving the decision of their meaning to the prophet himself. When Sin-tshuen arrived, he said that some of these speeches came from above, and others from below. He tried to check this mania of other folks for revelation by prohibiting the use of opium and ardent spirits, even of tobacco.

In the rugged mountains of Kwang-si lived always robbers and outlaws, who often ransacked the neighbouring villages. Their number increased, and they formed regular bands. Most of them were such people from Kwangtung and the neighbouring provinces as were called by the aboriginal inhabitants (the Puntis) settlers or Hakkas. These latter had many villages in Kwang-si, but they were not as rich as the Puntis, and always quarrelled with them. Over a marriage case, in September, 1850, war between the Puntis and Hakkas commenced. The Puntis were beaten at first, for the Hakkas were helped by the out-

laws; but the Puntis got assistance from the mandarins, and then the Hakkas were defeated in their turn. Their houses having been destroyed by fire, in their distress they took refuge with the followers of Sin-tshuen, who were living in small communistic communities, numbering from one to three hundred persons, throughout the country.

In this manner the Puntis and the mandarins, their protectors, became the enemies of Sin-tshuen and his sect. Sin-tshuen and Yun-jan were compelled to hide in the house of a friend, at a place only accessible by a defile which a handful of people might defend. The mandarins became acquainted with this place of refuge, and sent troops, by whom the pass was blockaded. The commune at Thistlehill received news of the danger of their prophet—it was said, of course, by revelation. A great crowd gathered, and beat off the imperial soldiery. Now, thought Sin-tshuen, was the time to unveil his plans. He had made preparation by inducing all members of the different communities to sell their property, and depose it in the common treasure, from which every one had what he wanted. So when he called them out to battle, free from impediment, they followed his call in great numbers.

Sin-tshuen having seized at once an important market-town, surrounded by a large river, fortified it. When the imperial soldiers arrived, they only erected a camp. When provisions ran short, Sin-tshuen evacuated the town safely, by help of a stratagem. The mandarins, when they entered, plundered and burned above two thousand shops, and murdered many of the inhabitants. This cruelty excited the people, and the war began in earnest. Even the women took an active part in it. Two female commanders joined the rebels, each leading two thousand fighting women. These dangerous troops the prophet set apart, and one-half of them he placed in advance of his right, the other half in advance of his left, wing.

The chiefs of the Triad society, whose purpose was the restoration of the Ming dynasty and the expulsion of the Tartars, thought it wise to support the rebel chief. Sin-tshuen bade them welcome if they would worship as he did. This they would do, they said; and sent in their bribes in victuals. The prophet sent them sixteen preachers of the new doctrine. After this the eight chiefs of the Triad society, with their troops, joined in the growing strife. Fifteen of the preachers had all the money given them by their disciples paid into the common purse, as the law would have it; but one of them kept it for himself. He sold arms belonging to the commune to buy opium. He was drunk, and had wounded some brethren. He was decapitated.

This severity made a peculiar impression on the eight chiefs of the Triad society. "If a man," they said, "who has been sent as a teacher to us is treated so severely for a trifling offence, how would they deal with us?" That was the thought which induced seven of them to leave the sect, and even join the army of the

emperor. One of them, Lo-shai-kang, liked both the discipline and religion of Sin-tshuen, and was faithful to his cause. Sin-tshuen agreed with the Triad society as to expulsing the Tartars, but not as to restoring the Ming dynasty. "When our plains and hills will be reconquered," he said, "then we will found a new dynasty."

In the autumn of 1851, Sin-tshuen removed his camp to the city of Yung-ngan, in East Kwang-si, where he took the treasury and the provisions of the government.

In this city Sin-tshuen was proclaimed emperor of the new dynasty, which was called "Thac-ping Theen-kwoh" (Great quiet Kingdom of Heaven). The success of the rebel emperor after this time is known. He led his army through the provinces of Kwang-si, Hu-nan, Hu-peh, Kiang-si, Ngan-hwut, and Kiang-su, where he conquered the old capital of China, Nan-king, in March of the year 1853.

He has, at length, taken Nan-king, the sacred old national city, the Moscow of China, leaving his enemies the mandarins as yet in possession of Peking, comparatively modern, and with no particular sacredness about it. Perhaps this is of good augury to us, now the masters of Peking with the imperial palace Yuen-ming-yuen in ashes at our feet, and the imperial prince Kung quietly taking the right hand or lower place in presence of our envoy. If, as they say, Peking is China, and the holder thereof the ruler of the country, then the last hour of the great mandarin sham has sounded, and between "Young China" and the red-haired barbarians the burial will not long delay.

The rebels against the constituted state authority are also rebels against the constituted state religions. The two often go together in the history of nations, and stand as cause and effect strongly linked in one. They are, in a manner, Christians, these Tai-pings; in a manner only, for their doctrines are somewhat confused and their theology of the clumsiest, and the way in which they mix the waters of their various fountains more wonderful than admirable. But twilight is very dear in a dungeon, and the smallest chink which lets in the sun is very serviceable when the life below is perishing for lack of light. Even the unsatisfactory travesty of Christianity which the Prince of Peace and his disciples set forth is a better something than the atheistic nothing, common to the more educated Chinese mind. The Buddhist has a firmer grasp on truth than this, for any positive form of faith is preferable to dead negation.

Europeans who have been much in China and are supposed to know more of the bearings of this national question, advocate our alliance with the rebel party, even while we are thundering at the gates of the imperial palace, and smashing the lions set before the Tartar quarters. It is said by those who know better than ourselves, that this Ming or national party "is desirous to be on friendly terms with us, is ready to make the most favourable treaties with us, and to give every guarantee we could de-

mand for the loyal execution of these treaties." Furthermore, that "whatever treaty we may make with the actual dynasty, we shall have to go over the same ground again to obtain it from the Ming, should the Tartar be conquered; particularly if we should have shown sympathy or partiality for the fallen dynasty." Which last, however, is scarcely likely. The Christian doctrines, too, deformed as they are, would be a bond of union between the Taipings and ourselves, and might afford a foothold for a truer and better development. The fact of any new doctrine at all, no matter what, being received by the Celestials, is a circumstance so immensely encouraging, that we may build almost any theory of hope we like upon it; and it does not seem too much to believe that a sect of bastard Christians may one day join the body of the truer Church, and make themselves one with the great family of civilised nations. If this should ever be the case, we shall have opened up China by a better means than fire and sword. It may be that the coincidence of these two historical actions—the uprising of a national party in a manner christianised, and the conquest of Peking by a christian Western nation—are intended to be the means by which Chinese exclusiveness is to be overcome, and the long isolated nation received into the brotherhood of the human family. If there is any political significance at all in this Ming party—and no one who understands the question has yet doubted the value of its ultimate tendency—it does seem the wisest thing for us to do to make common cause with the "rebels," and so serve humanity while helping forward our own designs. Would this be the first time in history when England's designs served the whole human race?

Anything is better than the present rule in China; any set of governors superior to the Tartar, with his stolid conceit, his treachery and love of lies, his vanity and puffed-up arrogance, his emptiness and pretension. Tigers at the gates of the Tartar barracks are set as signs and symbols of the dauntless spirits within; and the imperial guard, or "tigers" as they are called, wear the head and eyes of the creature painted on their yellow tunics, also as symbolic of their nature. They cover their heads with cats'-eared caps, to make them yet more thoroughly like the beasts they represent, and are altogether terrible fellows: fire-eaters, who expect their enemies to fall down and beg for life and mercy as soon as they come within eyeshot, and see what awful beings they have to deal with. Yet the Tartars are not really cowards, however boastful and arrogant. People who can tranquilly eat their rice while shot and shell are flying over their heads, who can calculate the exact range of fire and quietly hang out their clothes to dry just within the mark and straight in the line, who can cluster round the feet of the soldiers in the field and pick up their cartridge papers, and dart in and out among the war ships between cross fires everywhere,—a people so cool and calm and self-pos-

sessed are not wholly despicable, though they do boast so violently and lie so tremendously. Lie! It is the natural life both of a Tartar and a Chinaman: he draws it in with his mother's milk, and he exhales it in his last sigh. The very dead are lied to, and the ghosts themselves deceived. For is not gold and silver paper, in the form of ingots, strewn over the graveyard, so that when the bad spirits come prowling about to catch the ghosts taking an airing, they may be attracted by all this show of wealth, and, stopping to pick up the ingots, may thus give time to the poor hunted ghosts to slip back again into their graves, all snug and quiet? When a nation sets itself to cheat its dead we cannot wonder if it deceives the living. The rich dead are often kept for months, until the lucky moment arrives, or the right place is found for burying them; and one traveller tells us how old Howqua, the great tea man, at a dinner party, had several parcels of earth brought him, whence to choose the one where he would select to lie, and how he chose a gravelly one, and after as much matter-of-course deliberation as an English lady would have put into the selection of her wedding-gown.

This is only one of the many things in which the Celestials and the Westerns disagree. We wear black for mourning, they white; we reverence crowns and coronets, they boots and buttons; we build our walls solid, they hollow; we pull our boats, they push theirs; we have the orchestra in front of our stage, they put theirs behind; we feed the living, they the dead; we have a white flag for truce, they for war; we give our children games and our men business, they put their children to business and their full-grown men fly kites; we drink milk and sugar to our clear tea, they have neither to a cup half full of leaves; we hold one evidence of good breeding to consist in clean nails, well trimmed and filbert shaped, they in talons twelve inches long with bamboo sheaths to protect them; we pinch the waist, they the feet, of women; we make the right hand the place of honour, they of inferiority; we hold falsehood to be a shame, they count it a virtue, if successful and for a purpose. Wingrove Cooke's masterly summary may come in here, though every one has read it very likely more than once. But it is so clever that no one can object to reading it again, no matter how often before: "In a country where the roses have no fragrance, and the women no petticoats; where the labourer has no Sabbath and the magistrate no sense of honour; where the roads bear no vehicles and the ships no keels; where old men fly kites; where the needle points to the south, and the sign of being puzzled is to scratch the antipodes of the head; where the place of honour is on the left hand, and the seat of intellect is in the stomach; where to take off your hat is an insolent gesture, and to wear white garments is to put yourself in mourning—we ought not to be astonished to find a literature without an alphabet and a language without a grammar."

Great are the Chinese in business. Even their childish games are all of buying and selling, the tricks of trade, and how to best cheat their customers; and so keen are they it is next to impossible to cheat a Chinese child, whose trading faculty is developed to a point not often reached by the adult Western. The Chinese have always been forward in mechanical arts, and have had, as we all know, the germs—never the full fruition—of most of our great discoveries for many centuries among them. But they have been conservative, stationary, fossilised, and have mummified themselves and all about them by their conceit and stagnant pride. They are precisely, in all particulars, what they were when we sent our first embassy to them, with this sole difference, that Lord Macartney found them amicable, whereas they are now the reverse, and that their insolence was more endurable than than their insolence is now. But slowly as she has moved—so slowly as to be imperceptible to us by our own knowledge, China has a past, like the rest of us; and a past which, in some matters, went beyond the present. Odd as it sounds, China is absolutely in a state of decadence with respect to some of its arts, and the sons have not trodden in their fathers' steps: in one art, especially decaying—the porcelain manufacture. The porcelain manufacturers have lost their cunning, and the old ware is not equalled by the new. The secret of some of it is quite lost. The famous sea-green snackle, called Celadon by Louis the Fifteenth and his red-heeled shepherds and shepherdesses, is only to be found now among the Chinese old curiosity shops; so of the celebrated cream-coloured porcelain, worth a king's ransom when of perfect form and the true shade. They say that the art of these two special wares was known to but a few, and that the secret died with the last man of the set. Certain it is, that the modern productions are infinitely inferior to the ancient, and that collectors of virtù and brics-à-bracs would not give a straw for all the newly-baked cups and saucers in China. It is comforting to find even a backward movement in the midst of so much stagnation. If progress is the best thing, decadence comes next, as at all events evidencing a kind of life which the encrusted fossil has not got.

But the fact is, very much in China is decaying. The clay feet are crumbling at last, and soon the brazen image will come smashing to the dust. When our people entered Peking they found the whole place in the most wonderfully ruinous condition. Private houses were mere hovels—masses of rottenness flushed over with a little paint and gilding to make them look tolerably decent; the public buildings were even worse, for they were masses of rottenness without that outside flush of superficial patching. The board of punishments, and all the other boards, were tumble-down sheds of lath and plaster; shams, hollowness, and lies, like so much else. Everything governmental is a sham. The tremendous battles fought and

gained by the Tigers, exist but on the papers given to the king to read; the overwhelming armies gathered everywhere, and the supplies necessary to feed and maintain them, are only so many figures representing the speculations of the mandarins, but having no existence in reality; those "troublesome insects," the rebels, have been exterminated—on paper—over and over again, at the very time, perhaps, when they were making their most rapid strides towards supremacy; and we, the red-haired barbarians, were driven into the sea, or howling in our chains, when the Tartar generals were fleeing before us, and the Taku forts were in our hands. "The one man," as they call their emperor, is the best deceived man in the empire. Truth cannot get at him, and if she could, she would most probably be soundly rated, and sent about her business as a loveless hag whom nobody cared to house—"the one man" least of all. But the Chinese prefer lies to truth. They would not thank you to be taught that it was no dog or dragon devouring the sun in an eclipse, who has to be frightened away by hideous music, and the drumming of pots and kettles; that toothache is not caused by a worm gnawing at the root, nor ophthalmia by a maggot lying beneath the eyelid; that good luck in life is not securable by spells and charms; and that the fatherly character of their government is not best shown by barbarous punishments and sanguinary massacres; they prefer to think all this, instead of learning better—they prefer darkness to day. Prayer to them is rolling so many yards of printed sentences out of a machine, at so much the yard, and to them Min Joss stands in the place of penitence and aspiration. With no mercy in the executive, no truth in the government, no prayer in the heart, no love for man, and no fear of God, what can we expect but cruelty and deceit, Yeh's massacre and ghosts cheated in the graveyard, a lie accounted an honourable word, the infernal revelations of the prisons, and the barbarous torture of prisoners of war? Tai-ping will perhaps show us better things in the days of the national Christianity to come.

THE FLIGHT.

With flying gleams, the moon of March
Beats on the wind-blown lattices,
Whose Norman casements flame and fade,
Vague lightnings through the chestnut-trees:
With tumult whitening on its skirts,
Rolls, to the west, one thunder cloud;
And, in the blue air overhead,
The stars sit in a golden crowd—
As, down the river, flowing fast,
With silence and the night we float,
A glory on the castle walls,
And darkness on our lonely boat.

Far up the levels of the flood,
Mid branching oak and sycamore,
A dizzy splendour floats and swims
Across the currents to the shore:
Bright, where the waters welter black,
In brimming spaces, dark and slow,

A blank, rich splendour in the tide,
 The moon dips in an amber glow—
 As down the river, drifting fast
 With silence and the night we float,
 A glory on the castle walls,
 And darkness on our lonely boat.

At times, high up the lands of corn,
 The roofs of sleeping villages,
 Old chimneys, smoked and quaintly slacked,
 Old tabards, swinging in the breeze,
 Gray steeple-tops, and belfries brown,
 Red tapers winking through the night,
 And gables, overgrown with vine,
 Rush past, like beacons on our flight—
 As down the river, to the sea,
 Amid the tranquil night we float,
 Faint splendours on the castle walls,
 And darkness round our lonely boat.

Like giant cities, to the south,
 The peak'd hills prop the rifted cloud ;
 And, through the gorges, dark with fern,
 The mountain torrents thunder loud.
 The plains are steaming to the moon,
 The white ash glimmers by the stream,
 And, in the meadows crisped with frost,
 The cattle couch within the beam—
 As down the river, broadening fast,
 Thro' swathing foam, we swiftly float,
 Dim, dimmer still, the castle walls,
 And darkness on our lonely boat.

Far, in the north, where shifts and flits
 Yon vexed brightness, in the skies,
 The temple walls and mighty domes
 Of the imperial city rise.
 Hurrah ! the frothing rapids roar.
 Along the forests on our lee ;
 Back, like a phantom, reels the shore,
 Our boat is on the wild fresh sea.
 Out on the green and wrinkled tides,
 'Mid silence and the stars we float ;
 Prayer on our lips, peace in our hearts,
 And moonlight on our lonely boat.

THE TABLE D'HÔTE.

It is curious how much one table d'hôte is like another. There is always the old gentleman with a rosette in his button-hole, who has dined there for fifteen years regularly, and who would be a very agreeable companion, if his throat and lungs were in better order, and required a less frequent and less noisy amount of clearing out. Then there is the particular gentleman, a foreigner too, who is neatly dressed, who wears gold spectacles, who inspects his plate very closely, who frowns at it, who wipes it with his napkin, with which he next proceeds to polish his wine-glass ; holding it up to the light afterwards, to see how the process has answered, and muttering to himself invectives against the uncleanness of the service. This gentleman is a connoisseur in cookery too, a cheap epicure, and openly disparages everything that is put before him, eating, however, very freely of each dish as it comes round. Then there is the newly married couple, natives of England ; the wife heavy, stupid, fair ; the husband one of that

class who may be disposed of in one word, that word being Goose ; a gentleman, with about an inch between the roots of his hair and his eyebrows, and the top of whose head would fit into a good-sized teacup. Then there is the old rascal whom one sets down instinctively as a camp, with a grey moustache and a bald ring upon the top of his head, who perhaps drew his first breath in the Emerald Isle ; a country which has certainly given birth to the old lady who sits not far off, and who seems to consider herself, for some reason unexplained, the patroness of the meal. This old lady is so enveloped, so girt about, and fortified as to the head, with braids, and twists, and intertwinements of massive and hard-edged brown hair, in addition to certain gigantic outworks of cap, that she is fain, when desirous of observing her neighbours on either side—which is frequently the case—to screw her old eyes into complicated corner glances ; for she cannot get her neck to revolve under such a load. One would also say, to see how she crouches when a waiter hands anything over her head, that she is in some fear lest the whole structure which decorates it, hair, cap, ribbons, and flowers, should be knocked off into her neighbour's plate. It is a curious fact that the proprietors of fictitious heads of hair are always, as logicians say, for proving too much. They are not contented with the mere fact of having hair in great plenty at an advanced age—which one would think would be enough—but they are always going in for a degree of luxuriance which would be next to impossible even in youth. They are for ever adding more and more massive and redundant braids, and plaits, and festoons, to outrage all probability.

There is something very unsatisfactory about a table d'hôte, considered as a meal. You are always eating too much and always feeling as if you had had nothing. You reserve yourself for something that never comes, and reject condiments which you would gladly recal were that proceeding possible. Surely, too, there is something unsatisfactory in sitting—not in the same room merely, as you do at a restaurant—but at the same table, with a score or two of people, and not knowing one of them.

I have felt this to an excessive degree. For, it happened once that, owing to the irresistible force of a complication of unfortunate circumstances, I found myself dining at a table d'hôte on Christmas-day. The agencies which brought this about, need not be entered into. A slight degree of mismanagement bringing with it—as it not uncommonly does—a vengeance of untoward circumstances, all dovetailing in with each other to effect their terrific purpose—a missing of trains, a falling in of the term of my lodgings at an inconvenient season, a compulsory delay to give time for the reception of letters—these, and such-like matters, all combined, as stated above, with a certain amount of mismanagement, brought it about that, instead of eating my Christmas dinner among beloved and familiar faces, I had to partake of that meal in a

strange land, and surrounded by persons who did not care a wink of the eye whether I was alive or dead the next morning.

In looking forward to the day's dinner—an allowable thing, let us hope, always, but more particularly when, as on Christmas-day, that meal is looked upon as a kind of solemn rite—in looking forward to the dinner and speculating upon it, I had occupied myself a good deal with the nature of the company, wondering whether I should haply have the table to myself; whether, on the contrary, there would be a large gathering; whether I should be able to read on any faces of those who might be present the reason of their being there—away from friends and relatives, at that social season of the year. Above all, I occupied myself with wondering whether I should hear my own native language talked; whether there would be any English besides myself at the table d'hôte of the inn at Schnowenberg.

To my surprise I found the table, long as it was, well filled with the class of persons that is usually found at such places. But over them all—and especially over those members of my own country who were present—there seemed to hang a cloud of melancholy which was very conspicuous, and a counterpart of which may have rested on my own countenance. We all looked ashamed of being there, and every one of us seemed to look upon his neighbour with suspicion. How the deuce was it that *he* was there on Christmas-day? That was the question which every Englishman present asked himself about every other Englishman. There was that young man with the moustache and his young wife—what did they do there on such an occasion? There must be a screw loose there. They have been living too expensively, and have an amount of debt hanging over them at home which renders it dangerous to return even to keep Christmas there. Or perhaps it is a runaway match—yes, that must be it. They have run away, and are keeping out of England for the present. It would never do to be acquainted with *them*. Then there is that Irish gentleman with the dyed moustache, and the rings and chains: he has an insolvent look about him: a sort of halo of impecuniosity surrounds him. It would never do to know *him*. A slight conversation with that gentleman would have dangerous results. You would hear, in the course of the evening, a gentle tap at your room door, and on crying "Come in!" the Irish gentleman would appear with a profusion of apologies for intruding, and would volubly inform you that it "was the most ridiculous thing in the worrld, but he had just received a tiligraphic despatch summoning him to England upon important business, that it happened that he was without sufficient money to pay his reel-way fare, and that he had felt the moment he saw your countenance that you were the kyind of man who would be only too glad to assist a gentleman and a fellow countryman at a pinch." Then, with regard to that mysterious family with the half-pay officer at its head, his wife looking

as if she spent all her time in crying, with the daughter so poorly dressed, and the insatiably hungry boy—that half-pay officer (I know him to be such at a glance) is not a man to know; he would never do in England as an acquaintance afterwards.

And how would the two middle-aged ladies who are travelling together without any protector—how would *they* do as acquaintances afterwards? They would do very well if one wanted, perchance, to know a couple of damsels who were never likely to see filty again, and who, if they were not persuaded in their own minds that they were young girls, were fully persuaded that everybody took them to be so. They would do very well if one wanted to know two ladies who were determined to wear what they liked, and who liked, one a hood lined and turned back with scarlet, disclosing a wig parted at the side, and the other a juvenile brown hat with a childish brown feather and a profusion of brown curls showing beneath. Again, if your taste led you to admire a couple of spinsters who, being very open to criticism themselves, were in the habit of quizzing everybody with whom they were brought in contact, and giggling sportively behind their handkerchiefs at the young married lady opposite. If these characteristics gave you pleasure, and if you were interested in seeing two ladies, who, determining to be independent, would rush and push for all the comfortable places everywhere, turning other people out and trading upon the deference paid to their sex to secure the best of everything, and to indulge in every species of bargaining, haggling, and disputation—if these were your tastes, then would the lady in the hood and the lady in the innocent hat be the very acquaintances you would select, and your joy at finding them would be complete.

But if it happened that you associated with the idea of the feminine character certain graces of a modest and retiring kind; if, while you admired the display of courage and heroism in a woman when extraordinary circumstances rendered it necessary, you abhorred the assumption of such qualities where they had no place; then you would have done well to give the lady in the hood and the lady in the hat as wide a berth as possible.

We all, I say, looked upon each other with alarm and mistrust for being away from home on Christmas-day. The young Englishman with his English wife regarded the Irish gentleman with horror, while the half-pay lady watched the lady of the young Englishman with hardly disguised suspicion. Among the foreigners present there was of course no such feeling. They were all either Germans or French, and while the Germans were stolidly indifferent as to where they partook of their dinner, provided the meal was long enough, the Frenchmen were all proud of being there. A Frenchman is always proud of being anywhere where he is, and of doing anything that he is doing. He is proud of being at the play; he is proud of being on horseback; he is proud of being married, and will walk

about the town with his bride to show himself off; he is proud of making a purchase at a shop, of riding in a railway carriage, of being a prime minister, or of being a chiffonier. Of all these things he is proud, and not too proud to show it.

There was one person who occupied the place next to my own at the table, in whom I could not help feeling much interested. Soberly and plainly dressed, and possessed neither of youth nor beauty, there was nothing in the lady that would at first sight be likely to attract attention, and yet in my survey of the table I found myself more occupied with my neighbour than with any of the other guests. When first I observed her she was occupied, as the dinner had not commenced at that time, in reading a letter, and when the meal began she placed it by the side of her plate, seeming to abandon it with some regret. I could not help speculating a little about this lady. I could just see that the prefix to her name on the envelope of the letter was *Mademoiselle*; so I was justified in concluding that she was not married, and I had gained, from something I heard her say, information as to the ultimate destination towards which she was journeying. She had for a neighbour on the other side the strong-minded lady in the flaming hood, and she could hardly have been seated next a more inquisitive, not to say a more impertinently curious, personage. Question followed question in the most rapid succession, and, as my neighbour was wanting either in the will or the power to defend herself, this "curious impertinent" soon learnt the leading particulars of her journey. She had come from a village which she named in the neighbourhood of Hereford—*Eaton-Bishop* it was called, if I remember rightly—and she was travelling across Germany on her way to Pesh, to which place she was bound, not with any pleasure-seeking object, but to fill the post of governess in a native family there, who wanted an English lady to teach their children. At this stage of the inquiry, the worthy lady in the hood abandoned her victim as unworthy of further notice, while I for my part could not help in my imagination dwelling on the narrative the rough outline of which I had just overheard. What a bleak and dismal tale it suggested! To be making a long journey in such weather and alone was bad enough; but to have no cheerful prospect at the end of it—a reception by strangers, people of a different nation, of different habits, whom she knew nothing about, who might be coarse, rough, or even treacherous—what a prospect this was with the memory of the home she had left to make it worse! I felt sure that of all the trials connected with her heroic act, this Christmas abroad was the worst, and I even fancied that this poor lady had placed the home letter by her plate with a purpose, to be a friend at the Christmas feast.

But surely to all us English this public meal was at such a time a severe ordeal enough. It was very well to try and brave it out; but it

would not do. The English gentleman with the contracted skull, and the half-pay officer, ordered expensive wines against each other in silent defiance, and the waiters brought them in bottles of *Maçon ordinaire* placed in wicker cradles to keep them horizontal, and carried with elaborate caution. These expenses were indulged in vainly, as far as any happy result on the animal spirits was concerned. The gentleman from the Emerald Isle, determined not to be outdone, ordered a bottle of champagne, and glanced proudly around him as the cork flew up to the ceiling; but the only effect of this reckless behaviour was an increased depression on the part of him who had thus exceeded his means, and a tendency to sit moodily thinking of the bill during the intervals between the courses. Even an attempt on the part of the landlord to consult the prejudices of those English who were present by introducing roast beef and plum-pudding into his bill of fare, was not attended with success. The roast beef was tough and suggestive of cow, and the plum-pudding—concerning which the waiter whispered in every English ear that it was "like in England"—was a vague and squashy dish.

But, to rise from table and pay in ready money for a Christmas dinner—this was the culminating point of all. Having left the hotel the day before, and returning to take this one meal only, it actually happened that I was obliged to call a waiter aside to put into his hand, with an unhallowed chink, the money which this Christmas dinner had cost. What a sensation, at the moment when in so many households the guests were drawing round the fire to take their wine, with a host exhorting them not to spare the freely given cheer, to be rising from a table full of strangers, to be paying in hard cash for the dinner I had just swallowed, and to turn out into the dark and cold streets of Schnowenberg on my way to my lodging!

I have long had my doubts about the existence of what is commonly called a merry Christmas. Is there such a thing?

There may be, but I can only say that in my humble experience a merry Christmas is a phenomenon with which I am unacquainted. The fact is, that mirth is an ephemeral and wayward commodity, altogether irregular and unpunctual in its habits. It will come when it is not invited, when no one is courting it, when even it is not wanted; but it will not keep appointments that are made without its consent, and, like a conceited genius, it will refuse the invitations of its friends, and will drop in upon them when wholly unexpected, and when nobody is asked to meet it.

There are other reasons why Christmas is not generally a merry season.

How often are those assembled together at that time persons who seldom meet from choice, who, bearing each other no ill will, are yet not quite congenial spirits, nor even habitual associates. Nor is this all. How often must it happen when the same circle meets you year after year that there are unsightly gaps in it,

and that the sexton's book and the registrar's report can tell the reason why. Do these Banquo's seats, which every loving heart will fill with the ghosts of those who occupied them last year—do they help to make the feast a merry one?

Nor are these Banquo's seats all caused by death. Will not the mere absence of some dearly loved face, hundreds of miles away, spoil the family picture of which it was so bright an ornament? That lady who had been seated next me at the table d'hôte, was there no family circle in England in which the absence of her kind and honest face had made a blank?

And one again, to turn from the serious to the absurd—and they are ever cheek by jowl—is there never a more material reason for this depression, or shall we say oppression, of the animal spirits, than any which we have been considering? Is it not a fact that the feast on Christmas-day is preceded by a feast on Christmas-eve, and that the mince-pie and the sausage-trimmed turkey are known on both occasions? To put it then roundly—Is indigestion a thing unknown on Christmas-day, and can any merriment co-exist with that grim tormentor? Does the bilious eye see the funny side of things? Do yesterday's sausages, and yesterday's mince-pies, and yesterday's champagne, and yesterday's punch, combine to make to-day's stomach a calm and peaceable one? Oh, surely not. Surely there is in such a conglomeration the material for a gloomy morrow, and surely in the superadded sausages, mince-pies, champagne, and punch of the Christmas meal itself, there are found not uncommonly provocations to an after-dinner disputativeness, and even to a snappish tendency during the round game of the evening.

These were some of the thoughts with which I consoled myself as I turned out into the cold night air after my Christmas dinner at the table d'hôte. As I left the hotel, I glanced down the long corridor into which the doors of the smaller and cheaper class of bedrooms opened.

The English lady who had sat next me was just entering her solitary apartment, and I could see by the faint light of the lamp in the passage that she had still the letter in her hand.

MORE ABOUT SILKWORMS.

It is not surprising that our article "Silk for the Multitude"* should have brought in communications from correspondents. The storm which is hanging over the cotton-growing States of America, the stagnation of business, the unsettled condition of politics in India, and the manner in which China has hitherto fulfilled her treaties with the European, render the supply of textile material an important question at the present moment, and a serious consideration for the future. There is, besides, a great prize to be drawn. Whether individual speculators or the community at large are to reap the benefit,

does not much matter; but our mills and factories are insatiable; their iron teeth are ever craving for more; their capacious stomachs rapidly digest whatever alimentary substance is offered to them; and whoever can furnish them with a further supply at a cost of production remunerative to himself, will be certain to make fortune after fortune. The amount of silk imported from China, which was insignificant fifty years ago, is now so enormous and so constantly increasing, that it is well worth any one's trying to find, not perhaps a substitute, but certainly an auxiliary filament. Whatever it may be, if only of sufficient strength and sufficiently cheap, the skill of our manufacturers will be sure to turn it to good account.

As already stated in our previous article, ailanthine, or the silk of the bombyx which feeds on the leaves of the *Ailanthus glandulosus* (a perfectly hardy, robust, and vigorous tree), has been judged, on no light grounds, to promise well and to merit further cultivation in the warm and temperate regions of Europe. A sure and plentiful supply of raw material from abroad is undoubtedly a very good thing; but a plentiful home-growth is still surer and better. This is the point which gives such encouraging brightness to the prospects of the ailanthus silkworm. The pressing necessity, the urgent cry of all silkworms, of whatever species, is, "Food, food! Give us food, abundant and fresh! Half-fed, we perish; three-quarters fed, our produce is inferior, and our offspring feeble. Glut us, if you mean to profit by us. But you cannot glut us; our appetites are ravenous. Bring leaves again, ever fresh and fresh!"

The difficulty in silk-producing has hitherto lain in furnishing an army of silkworms with an adequate commissariat; it is now partially removed by the discovery that a very useful, if not a brilliant species of silkworm, feeds on the foliage of the ailanthus, from which a continued succession of substantial meals are obtainable all summer long. True, the ailanthus is late in leafing; but the mulberry-tree also is late. And by the peculiar mode of growing the ailanthus recommended when the subject is to feed silkworms—namely, as a copse-wood starting from permanent stools—the leafing will be earlier than it would be on tall forest trees; it might also be forced by a top-dressing of manure, and likewise by planting a certain quantity of ailanthuses in the most sheltered and sunny nooks to afford the earliest food of the new-hatched worms. The hatching would be retarded, as with other silkworms, by keeping the eggs in a very cool place until the leaves which are to be their nourishment are sufficiently developed. After a certain time, indeed, it is almost impossible to prevent the hatching of the eggs; but except in exposed and rigorous localities, the ailanthus will be ready to receive them. Common sense will indicate where experiments are likely to be successful. Sanguine expectations could hardly be entertained respecting a trial in Caithness or Sutherland.

The history of the mulberry silkworm teaches

* See page 233 of the present volume.

us that it is impossible to tell beforehand what modifications in the produce of the new species, what improvements, perhaps, may be induced by the different soils and climates of the yet untried countries where it is grown. For instance, in mulberry silk, colour is of the utmost importance. Japan silk, the produce of a peculiar race or variety of worm, is naturally of a beautiful white, which gives it great value; Persian also and China silks are white. Bengal silk is yellow; Italy sends us both white and yellow. Bengal is a more even silk than China; Italian silk is better than either. And yet Italy is quite as much a foreign country to the mulberry silkworm as any part of Europe is both to the ailanthus silkworm and to the ailanthus itself. The vegetable flourishes and makes itself perfectly at home here; the insect promises to do the same. There is, therefore, good cause to make attempts, widely as well as with energy and spirit. Good can hardly fail to come of it, although we may be unable to predict where exactly, or in what shape it will come.

A correspondent, lately returned from Victoria, appears struck by the apathy, want of research, or what you will, on the part of the English government, in respect to the silk-producing worms which exist in, or might be introduced to, our Australian colonies. In the colony of Victoria, he says, not only does the castor-oil plant grow to the greatest possible perfection, propagating itself so abundantly by seed, that it is difficult to eradicate it from a garden when once established there; but it also carries on its ample foliage a goodly family of bombyx caterpillars. From the suitability of the climate to the cultivation of the tree (which is not seriously affected even by the hot winds of the country), it would really appear to be a project well worth the attention of the parties interested.

Again, on the common gum-tree, or eucalyptus, there lives a caterpillar which forms its cocoons in three or four dead leaves, and which hang pendent from the small branches of almost every tree and bush. The leafy covering which protects the silk much resembles in form the closed petals of a fuchsia. The cocoon is generally of the size of an almond with the shell on. The silk is very fine in quality, and exceedingly strong. Now, the gum-tree in Australia is one of the most hardy of indigenous plants. It is self-sowing and most tenacious of life, so much so that it will even resist the action of fire. Its leaves, too, are persistent—a circumstance of minor importance, as the gum-tree silkworm, like the others, would have its own due season commencing in early summer, after the young shoots of the year had made some growth.

Unfortunately, the gum-tree, like the castor-oil plant, is not hardy in England or in the north and the interior of France, and therefore cannot be looked to for a supply of silkworm food here to any useful or practical extent. And it is a question how far silkworm culture is suitable as

an occupation for a young and rising colony, which requires every available pair of hands for ruder labours and more important services. Roads, canals, bridges, forest clearing, the pasturage of flocks and herds, house building, self-defence, and even encroachments on native territory, leave little leisure for manly arms to bestow on such light work as the culture of silk, which yet might be made a source of great gain. Women and children are still too few. It is mainly amongst the redundant population of Europe, China, and Hindostan, that we may expect to find the number of light hands requisite to make silk-growing a profitable, nay, a possible speculation.

If our government would paternally and benevolently interfere in the matter, the means and the machinery are ready. We have costly botanic gardens, both at home and abroad, of which Kew may be taken to be the metropolis and the mother-garden, for the importation and distribution of rare, useful, or ornamental plants. The gardens in the British colonies and dependencies, such as Sydney, Trinidad, Calcutta, Bombay, Saharanpore (Mauritius), and Ascension Island, are maintained at an expense of many thousands a year. Their intention is to be depôts and half-way houses for the interchange of valuable tropical and other plants. Now, an insect whose very existence depends on the culture of a certain tree, can hardly be considered as an intruder, or as out of its proper place, in a botanic garden. Economic entomology is so thoroughly based on economic botany as to be a necessary growth and consequence from it, and not an unhealthy parasite or excrescence. Foreign botanic gardens have judged they acted rightly in maintaining a stock of cochineal insects on cactus plants in their hothouses. Bees are regarded as fitting inmates of a pleasure-ground planted with honey-giving flowers; and new-imported silkworms may surely claim a place where only they can obtain their natural nutriment. The cocoon is, in fact, almost as much the natural growth of the tree as the fruit, and silk clearly falls within the botanist's domain. Such capacious minds as those of Sir William and Doctor Hooker would hardly refuse to allow the public to watch the progress of a few scores of caterpillars at Kew; and as to the colonial gardens, a word from Dr. Lindley (who has given to the government wise suggestions and valuable advice on more than one occasion), would probably cause attention to be directed to the study of little-known silkworms abroad. We must not forget, however, that the English spirit is self-helping; we are not in the habit of depending upon imperial patronage; we do not wait for emperors to set the first step, and take the initiative in any likely project. Neither the Southdown and the Leicester sheep, nor the short-horn cattle, were derived from national flocks or royal farms. Individual energy and enterprise, often massed into the combined strength of a company, are most generally the agencies by which our grandest schemes are carried into execution.

The culture of the ricinus silkworm in Australia (and also at the Cape of Good Hope) is at least worth a thought; both the insect and the plant are settlers from an older country. Respecting the native caterpillar on the native gum-tree, we are less sanguine in our expectations; for no better reason, however, than that—without saying that no good indigenous thing can come out of Australia—the probabilities are much against it. It is even remarkable that so wide an area, so favourably situated in respect to latitude, should have yielded so few useful novelties to its discoverers. As Ophir furnished gold and peacocks, so Australia sends us gold and cockatoos, with love-birds and paroquets of her own, but hardly a fruit or a vegetable fit to appear on a European table. Even a superior variety of mushroom is probably of foreign origin. From its neighbourhood we get little more than that very poor affair, New Zealand spinach. Very few of its ornamental plants and shrubs will bear the out-door climate of Northern and Central Europe. "Botany Bays," as gardeners used to call Australian plants, are upon the list of gardeners' plagues.

On the other hand, the natural productions of China and Japan appear to be endowed with an innate compatibility for the climate of the United Kingdom. The list of introductions from those regions which have thriven from the first with us, instead of being nearly null and void, as is the case with the Australian group, is most voluminous. It includes garden vegetables, flowering plants, shrubs, trees, deciduous and evergreen, beasts, birds, fishes, and insects. Every year is adding to our stock from those quarters; it will be extraordinary if our victorious mission in China do not bring back some useful and agreeable additions which will prove as thrifty with us as they are at home. Look at what has been done by one person alone, Robert Fortune, who will be one of the first to declare how much organic treasure still remains to be gathered. In short, if an untried plant or living creature is known to come from Northern China or Japan, there is a strong presumption in its favour that it will turn out an acquisition to Great Britain, Ireland, France, and Italy. From that home have been made to emigrate both the ailanthus-tree and the silkworm which it supports.

Another correspondent requests to be put in the way of obtaining a small supply of the new silkworms' eggs, by being placed in communication with the persons who rear them. But it must be clear that no contributor to this journal—however willing to oblige, as the present writer is—can undertake to execute commissions, nor even to answer letters privately. If only one tenth of the readers of an article which excited people's interest were individually to address its author, expecting an individual reply, the tax of time and postage stamps would be so heavy as to render periodical literature a losing speculation. In respect to both the eggs and the ready hatched silkworms, it will happen with them as with other marketable articles—a

demand will create a supply. According to the natural course of things, they will be obtainable for money. There are numerous persons in London and elsewhere who deal in live creatures for the stocking of zoological gardens, menageries, aviaries, aquariums, and private apartments, who will supply you with anything, from lions and tigers to toads and frogs; and it is more than likely that the bombyx of the ailanthus will be to be bought in Covent Garden Market during the coming summer. The rearing of a few of these useful insects would be quite as amusing, and may, perhaps, become as fashionable, as the tending a useless, though instructive and interesting, aquarium. But there should be no disputing about tastes, especially as one does not interfere with the other. What intending amateurs must do at once is to plant, as soon as the frost will allow, young ailanthus-trees in proportion to their projects.

If the London Zoological Society intends rearing a colony of the silkworms, their distribution will be greatly facilitated. At present, a large stock of eggs would be in the hands of the society who have founded the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation, in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris; such eggs would be at the disposal of Monsieur Guérin-Méneville, as would also be the produce from the Emperor's five thousand ailanthuses in La Sologne. Madame La Comtesse Drouyn de Lhuys ought also to be possessed of a considerable quantity of eggs.

In the course of last December the writer visited the Acclimatising Garden in the Bois de Boulogne, with a view to the interests of this journal. The French scientific journals and the feuilletons of the newspapers had announced its opening as if it were complete and in working order: but it turned out to be as yet a very unfinished and half-empty shell. Immediately to the left, on entering, there is a hothouse, or greenhouse, to which you are not admitted; but it is probably not for show at all, but merely a propagating house for the increase of plants to fill up beds and corners that are gaping wide to receive them. There is an aquarium, which will be charming when the tanks are filled with water and fish; there are paddocks, stables, huts, kennels, only waiting for their occupants. It must be laid to the fault of the weather that, of those occupied, many of the tenants were invisible; whilst in others, a melancholy ostrich or a moping stag peeped sadly at you over a half-door, or through an open wicket, being prevented by their considerate keepers from running out in the rain and catching cold.

The garden was founded on the principle that (although very happy to receive strangers at a franc, and their carriages at three francs admission each) it is not to be a mere show or menagerie open to the public, like our Regent's Park Garden; nor is it to embrace the whole of scientific zoology, like the Jardin des Plantes, with its attached museums and schools of comparative anatomy; but is to confine its operations to the introduction of living creatures

that promise to be useful to man in an alimentary, auxiliary, industrial, or ornamental way. Consequently, in the list of the species composing the collection, which is sold for two sous at the entrance gate, there are no beasts or birds of prey; no lions, no bears, although both might be regarded as alimentary, their flesh being eaten; no eagles nor condors. The society has here drawn a line which may be convenient, but which they will find difficult to observe. The vulture, the hyæna, and all off-eating creatures, are sanitary auxiliaries, and ought, therefore, to be admitted. Untamable species of horse are scarcely auxiliary, although they may be alimentary to hippophagists. Dogs, which are auxiliaries in England, are alimentaries in China; and if the society takes further lessons from the Flowery Land, it must welcome choice breeds of kindly-feeding rats, fine-flavoured earthworms and the profitable races of cats, which combine the highest merits of for and flesh. The ostriches of Africa and America and the Australian cassowary are classed as industrial (for their feathers) and alimentary. If the pelican and three of the kangaroos be received as alimentary, the chetah, or hunting leopard, the fishing cormorant of China, and the hawks employed in falconry ought likewise to be there. But time will settle many of these little matters, and the leading intention is evidently good.

Not so the name selected by the society, which is unfortunate and open to great objection; for it assumes the settlement in its favour of a most important and disputed point. What is acclimation? and is there such a thing as acclimation, in the obvious and literal sense of the word? The theoretic naturalists of the old generation say that there is; they hold that man, by his "cares," his arts, and his what-not, is able so to modify the constitution of plants and animals, as to make them support, in a new country, conditions which they could not bear at home; that he can, consequently, suit their constitutions to the country to which it may please him to transfer them. This would be true acclimation; and when the society has made the reindeer thrive through Parisian summers, and the castor-oil plant resist the winters of La Beauce, they may enjoy their title uncavilled at. Others hold that the so-called process of acclimatising is merely the testing how much cold and heat, how much exposure, drought, or hunger, an animal's or a plant's constitution will bear. A new flower, the *Dielytra spectabilis*, is brought from China; it is found to bear our severest winters; but it did so from the very first. We have only tested, not increased its hardiness. Another flower, the heliotrope, is introduced from Peru; the slightest frost scorches it. It has yet to be acclimatised, and we may wait a long time for that consummation. Pheasants and peafowl from the Himalayas and Japan are easily acclimatised here, because they were really acclimatised before they came; but all the learned societies in Europe cannot make a colony of love-birds take to the Black Forest as

a winter residence. A regiment of soldiers are sent to occupy a pestilential marsh; three-fourths of them die of fever. The survivors, men of iron constitution, are said to be inured to the climate, or to be acclimatised. In all these cases, there is a confusion of a result with a cause. A society of naturalisation would excite no criticism. An Englishman is naturalised in France; British weeds are naturalised in New Zealand; cocks and hens are naturalised nearly all the world over. The common nasturtium, or *Tropæolum majus*, with us a tender annual from South America, where it is perennial and woody-stemmed, is naturalised in European gardens, because it produces abundant seeds which retain (as seeds ripened in Mexico would retain) their vitality through European winters. The plant itself remains as tender as ever; it is naturalised, not acclimatised.

The first president of the new society is M. Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, the worthy son of the celebrated Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire. A fixed idea with the association seems to be the power of man in modifying nature to the benefit of the whole community of mankind. They quote Buffon's saying, that man is not sufficiently aware either of nature's capabilities, or of man's influence over nature. They institute a committee of climatology, who are to study the mode of intervention of meteorological phenomena in the acclimation of animals and plants. They vote a medal (well deserved) to Commandant Maury of the National Observatory, Washington, for his climatological labours, which appear to have a direct bearing on the society's objects.

A portion of the Bois de Boulogne having been granted by the City of Paris, for the formation of a garden of applied zoology, its direction was confided to Mr. Mitchell, for many years the able secretary to the Regent's-park Garden. It was no easy task to remodel the plan with which he was familiar at home, and to arrange a collection of animals which should include those only from which we may expect to benefit by their strength, their flesh, their wool, or any other products that can be made available in agriculture, the arts, manufactures, or commerce, comprising even those whose utility is only of a secondary degree, as subservient to our recreative pleasures, in the way of ornament, the chase, or familiar pets. The landscape gardening and the buildings were in full activity when they were temporarily checked by Mr. Mitchell's sudden death. A provisional committee, however, was named, and its secretary, M. Albert Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, continued the works of the establishment. The City of Paris gave water for the ponds; habitations were built for deer, antelopes, moulons, bouquetins, chamois, Angora goats, lamas, and alpacas. A handsome magnanerie, or silkworm-house, was erected, so arranged as to allow visitors to inspect the insects without touching them. Around it are plantations of mulberry, ailanthus, oak, and, in summer, beds of the castor-oil plant.

Mr. Mitchell's decease is likely to prove a serious loss to the society in much more than meets the eye. It is hardly too much to say that it throws the society several years behind-hand. There are people in Paris quite capable of laying out a public garden and of designing elegant receptacles for the accommodation of foreign animals; but there is no one possessed of his knowledge of the possibilities and the capabilities of birds and beasts in general, and of his experience of what has been doing—what successes and what failures have taken place in the great English menageries during the last five-and-twenty years. From what we see in the garden, as far as it is completed, and from the critical flourishes of trumpets which we read in the French scientific journals, it would appear that the Acclimation Society have started with the dreams of domesticability that were current sixty years ago. They seem to have more faith in the theories of Buffon and Temminck, than they would put in the experience of Yarrell and Mitchell, were those gentlemen still spared to instruct them. Ostriches are to supply us with poultry-beef, and now and then treat our children and other light weights to pleasant trips on birdback. Hoccos, guans, and curassows are to become a valuable addition to our poultry-yards. In short, all the zoological experiments ending in non-success are to be verified over again, forgetting that the taming of an individual and the ready multiplication of the race in domesticity are quite distinct and different processes. Our stock of domestic elephants would soon be at end, if we did not continually catch wild ones from the woods. It would hardly pay to replenish our poultry-yards in this way with curassows from South America. True, they *do* breed in captivity, exactly rarely enough, and in sufficiently small numbers to prove that their utility as domestic poultry is null. The Cracidae, the whole family of guans, &c., have had their fair trial in the late Lord Derby's menagerie at Knowsley, and in the Regent's-park. The Acclimation Society may spare themselves the trouble of trying them again.

The society is rich in rare and valuable geese and bernicles, and also possesses a pair of that very elegant and pleasing bird the black-necked swan; but Mr. Mitchell would not have allowed a crowd of pairs of various species to throng together and bicker in the same small pond, if he had any intention of their propagating. For that, each pair must be as isolated and undisturbed as possible. In this department many a British park has attained greater success than is likely to befall the Bois de Boulogne. The weaker species of swan especially require to be protected from the bullying and the persecution of their stronger congeners. The graceful snow-white swan of our ornamental waters, the Cygnus olor, is a selfish and relentless tyrant. Were he introduced to the haunts of the black-necked swan in South America, he would probably exterminate the native species. Perhaps, after all, the society's bonâ fide utilitarian triumph may

be limited to the naturalisation of a useful silk-worm; and the society may well be content, seeing that a really new and really domestic creature is not introduced once in a hundred years. How many birds have been domesticated in Europe since the Christian era? Two or three only; the turkey, the China goose, and the musk duck; because it is doubtful whether we can allow you the guinea-fowl. Nor can we grant, as really domestic, birds which, like canaries, are kept in cages or aviaries, or which, though tame, as many geese and swans, are obliged to be pinioned to prevent their flying away to the wilderness. Of insects domesticated for their usefulness, we have bees and silk-worms; and what besides? The cochineal. Several domesticate themselves against our wills, and may have their utility; I do not dislike to see a spider or two about the house, particularly during a gnatty and fly-blown season; but my housekeeper remonstrates against the indulgence of this fancy. A learned physician has recommended the employment of a swarm of mosquitoes as a substitute for blisters and leeches combined, in cases of coma. But insects in general need no Society of Acclimation to care for them. In hot countries they are our masters rather than our slaves; on which account we may fairly congratulate ourselves upon living in a temperate climate.

The society is endeavouring to found a Philosophical Menagerie, to serve for the investigation of the laws in virtue of which animals pass from the wild to the domesticated state, and in which the public can follow the patient labours of man, who, "calling in the brute to the aid of nascent economy, gradually raises it to the dignity of being useful, and thus, by the benefits of domesticity, creates one by one the animated instruments of industry." Thus, if we take for example the most intelligent of these faithful and dumb auxiliaries, the dog which has been the least modified by man is the Australian dog. Scarcely emerged from the condition of a savage, this prick-eared animal has beneath his silky hair a sort of wool or down which is, as it were, the natural clothing of his race, and which our domestic dogs have entirely lost. He does not bark; barking, on the part of the *civilised* dog, is an acquired faculty. After the Australian dog would come that of the Esquimaux. If the former expresses by his ardent eye, his savage gait, his angular outline, and his gross habits (civilised dogs are never gross in their habits; the word *cynical* is applicable only to wild races of dogs), the social condition of the least industrious and the most debased human tribe on earth, the Esquimaux dog (whose instinct is limited, or nearly so, to the dragging of sledges over ice) manifests the wants of a civilisation still very slightly complicated, but already capable of appropriating the strength of that dog and of the animal kingdom to a certain order of services. After the Esquimaux would come, in their order of dignity, the dogs belonging to the barbarous or the semi-barbarous peoples of Africa and the New World; next, those of the

arrested civilisations of Thibet, China, Hindostan, and Persia. This canine series would thus bring the animal, successively modified, from the savage type to the type of our first-rate domestic dogs, the stewards and deputies of man, the companions of his labours, and the distributors of his action over other animals. The chain of living progress would terminate with the dog of the United States of America, who churns the butter, who fulfils various household functions, and whose form, cultivated by man, denotes an cative and superior state of society.

If the society will acclimate these latter dogs, there may be a hope of further training them to act as waiters at the restaurants and box-openers at the theatres. But— The elephant is scarcely less intelligent and useful than the dog, although his size unfits him to be the companion and the playfellow of man. Where is the elephantine series to show the successive progress which the mighty beast has made under the influence of human civilisation?

Of course no silkworms were to be seen at the Bois de Boulogne in the month of December; although our enthusiastic correspondent has been able to defy the seasons, having for years had them constantly living in the larva state, from January to December, by keeping them in boxes tied round his body. The building, however, and the fittings of the magnanerie are complete and in working order, and will be to be seen in full action soon after the trees have come into leaf. It will be a most interesting object for excursionists who care for something more than every-day sight-seeing. It demonstrates the solution of the problem how to keep silkworms in multitude; which must be done, if they are to be turned to any commercial account. Our correspondent, like many other amateurs, always succeeded well when keeping them in small quantities; but when having them in large numbers, and expecting perfect success, he failed, having lost millions in a day.

The ailanthus silkworm will have to be subjected to the same management as that of the mulberry; only, being a robust caterpillar, it will bear more exposure and freer ventilation; and, being larger, more room must be allotted to the same number of individuals. They are kept in the magnanerie on separate open shelves, well exposed to the light and air, and arranged in the same way as those in the piece of furniture called a what-not. To the worms on these shelves fresh leaves are distributed at regular intervals. The most healthy plan would be the open-air rearing of the worms on growing bushes, but it is attended with several inconveniences. During the long days of summer, these caterpillar colonies would have to be kept or watched, to protect them from enemies, not only all day long, but for several of those hours which are usually called night; for the proverb says that it is the early bird which gathers most worms. Another deadly enemy defies all watching—the ichneumon fly, or flies, for there are several, which lay their eggs in the caterpillar's body, by the maggots hatched from which the cater-

pillar is inevitably destroyed before it attains the age of spinning. Ichneumons may be kept out of buildings by covering the ventilators with wire-gauze, like that of meat-safes. They might also perhaps be diverted by other prey, if a clump of luxuriant cabbages, such as would serve for a bower for Smith O'Brien, were planted close to the silkworms' abode, and well stocked with larvæ of the cabbage butterfly. Stint of food and irregular feeding are the most deadly enemies of all.

Therefore must profuse planting be looked to as the first foundation of sericulture. In silk-growing districts many landed proprietors make large profits, not by rearing worms themselves, but by selling leaves to those who do. Mulberry foliage, with them, comes into the category of clover, hay, and other fodder; it is a crop for the maintenance of live stock. The same will be the case with ailanthus leaves on the spread and adoption of the new silkworm. This, if possible in England and Ireland, will have the merit of creating a national manufacture; unlike the cotton trade, we shall not have to send abroad for the raw material, but shall produce it ourselves. But even with an abundant supply of leaves, it is not advisable for the same person to attempt rearing on too large a scale; a moderate quantity is a safer speculation, on account of the number of attendants required. For no kind of live stock is the master's eye more indispensable than for the thriftiness of silkworms. It has the advantage of furnishing employment to labourers and their wives and children at a season of the year when the labours of the field are not yet very pressing. The spinning process affords occupation on the largest scale. But in all silk-growing countries the three principal steps of the process have been gradually separated and performed by different persons, so as to constitute that division of labour which is mostly so advantageous for all parties. One set of farmers plant mulberry-trees, and sell the leaves; another set buy the leaves, rear the worms, and sell the cocoons; and lastly, the spinners buy the cocoons, spin them, and sell the silk. Unfortunately, in the case of any newly introduced branch of industry, the same person is obliged to do all himself; he is compelled to be planter, rearer, and spinner, all at once, and it is extremely difficult to do all equally well.

To give a few concluding hints: ants are great enemies to silkworms, and must be kept away by the usual means, such as strewing guano in their runs. Rats and mice are very fond of silkworms, and especially of the chrysalises. They will sometimes get into a heap of cocoons without exciting any suspicion of their presence, and will gnaw into the cocoons one after the other, without sparing a single one, in order to feast on their contents. Noise is said to be disagreeable to silkworms, which may or may not be a prejudice; but the vibration attending loud long-continued noises is certainly better avoided. All offensive smells are extremely dangerous; and even aromatic perfumes

are probably offensive. The most reasonable treatment is to keep silkworms in a pure and inodorous atmosphere. Close weather, such as precedes a thunderstorm, with the barometer low and the air heated, is also dangerous. If the air be dry, and the dust blowing, the floor of the house should be sprinkled with water; but if the atmosphere be loaded with moisture, a stove should be lighted to dry the place, whatever may be the degree of heat at the time. A silkworm house should be furnished both with a thermometer and an hygrometer. Either drought or humidity in excess are productive of evil consequences. The best ordinary temperature to maintain is about twenty-five degrees centigrade, or seventy-seven degrees Fahrenheit. Under these conditions, the rearing will be completed in thirty days. Crowding and heaping the worms on the shelves is a fatal circumstance; a yard square at least should be allowed to every thousand worms. They do not like obscurity, but manifest a fondness for light and heat. Cleanliness and ventilation are indispensable conditions of success. Feeding is most important; at the times of moulting, the worms eat little; but there is a period between each moult when they are insatiable. Frequent meals are of the greatest advantage. During the first three stages, the worms should have twelve meals in the twenty-four hours; from eight to ten during the fourth; and seven or eight in the fifth. The meals must not be interrupted at night. The attendants may divide themselves into two parties, one of whom will go to bed at nine in the evening to rise at three in the morning; the other half will keep watch till midnight. The leaves may be economised by chopping them into several pieces for worms in their first three stages. If the leaves are sodden by continued rains, the best way of drying them is by mixing them up with a sufficient quantity of coarse bran, which will absorb the moisture and be left untouched by the caterpillars. The leaves are best distributed by hand. It is more convenient to hatch the silkworms in successive batches rather than all at once, each batch being kept separate.

A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

I WENT the next morning to take leave of Harpar before starting, but found to my astonishment that he was already off! He had, I learned, hired a small carriage to convey him to Bregenz, and had set out before daybreak. I do not know why this should have annoyed me, but it did so, and set me a thinking over the people whom Echstein, in his "Erfahrungen," says, are born to be dupes. "There is," says he, "a race of men who are 'eingeborne Narren'—'native numbskulls,' one might say—who muddy the streams of true benevolence by indiscriminating acts of kindness, and who, by always aiding the wrong-doer, make themselves accomplices of vice." Could it be that I was in this barren category? Harpar had told me,

the evening before, that he would not leave Lindau till his sprain was better, and now he was off, just as if, having no further occasion for me, he was glad to be rid of my companionship—just as if—I was beginning again to start another conjecture, when I bethought me that there is not a more deceptive formula in the whole cyclopædia of delusion than that which opens with these same words, "just as if." Rely upon it, amiable reader, that whenever you find yourself driven to explain a motive, to trace a cause, or reconcile a discrepancy, by "just as if," the chances are about seven to three you are wrong. If I was not in all the bustle of paying my bill and strapping on my knapsack, I'd convince you on this head, but as the morning is a bright, but mellow, one of early autumn, and my path lies along the placid lake, waveless and still, with many a tinted tree reflected in its fair mirror, let us not think of knaves and rogues, but rather dwell on the pleasanter thought of all the good and grateful things which daily befall us in this same life of ours. I am full certain that almost all of us enter upon what is called the world in too combative a spirit. We are too fond of dragon slaying, and rather than be disappointed of our sport, we'd fall foul of a pet lamb, for want of a tiger. Call it self-delusion, credulity, what you will, it is a faith that makes life very livable, and, without it,

We feel a light has left the world,

A nameless sort of treasure,

As though one pluck'd the crimson heart

From out the rose of pleasure.

I could forgive the fate that made

Me poor and young to-morrow,

To have again the soul that played

So tenderly in sorrow,

So buoyantly in happiness.

Ay, I would brook deceiving,

And even the deceiver bless,

Just to go on believing!

"Still," thought I, "one ought to maintain self-respect; one should not willingly make himself a dupe." And then I began to wish that Vaterchen had come up, and that Tintefleck was rushing towards me with tears in her eyes, and my money-bag in her hands. I wanted to forget them. I tried in a hundred ways to prevent them crossing my memory; but though there is a most artful system of artificial "mnemonics" invented by some one, the Lethan art has met no explorer, and no man has ever yet found out the way to shut the door against by-gones. I believe it is scarcely more than five miles to Bregenz from Lindau, and yet I was almost as many hours on the road. I sat down, perhaps, twenty times, lost in reverie; indeed, I'm not very sure that I didn't take a sound sleep under a spreading willow, so that, when I reached the inn, the company was just going in to dinner at the table d'hôte. Simple and unpretentious as that board was, the company that graced it was certainly distinguished, being no less than the Austrian field-marshal in command of the district, and the officers of his staff.

To English notions, it seemed very strange to see a nobleman of the highest rank, in the proudest state of Europe, seated at a dinner-table open to all comers, at a fraction less than one shilling a head, and where some of the government officials of the place daily came.

It was not without a certain sense of shame that I found myself in the long low chamber, in which about twenty officers were assembled, whose uniforms were all glittering with stars, medals, and crosses; in fact, to a weak-minded civilian like myself, they gave the impression of a group of heroes fresh come from all the triumphant glories of a campaign. Between the staff which occupied one end of the long table and the few townsfolk who sat at the other, there intervened a sort of frontier territory uninhabited, and it was here that the waiter located me—an object of observation and remark to each. Resolving to learn how I was treated by my critics, I addressed the waiter in the very worst French, and protested my utter ignorance of German. I had promised myself much amusement from this expedient, but was doomed to a severe disappointment—the officers coolly setting me down for a servant, while the townspeople pronounced me a pedlar; and when these judgments had been recorded, instead of entering upon a psychological examination of my nature, temperament, and individuality, they never noticed me any more. I felt hurt at this, more indeed for their sakes than my own, since I bethought me of the false impression that is current of this people throughout Europe, where they have the reputation of philosophers deeply engaged in researches into character, minute anatomists of human thought and man's affections; "and yet," muttered I, "they can sit at table with one of the most remarkable of men, and be as ignorant of all about him, as the husbandman who toils at his daily labour is of the mineral treasures that lie buried down, beneath him.

"I will read them a lesson," thought I. "They shall see that in the humble guise of foot-traveller it may be the pleasure of men of rank and station to journey." The townsfolk, when the dessert made its appearance, rose to take their departure, each before he left the room making a profound obeisance to the general, and then another but less lowly act of homage to the staff, showing by this that strangers were expected to withdraw, while the military guests sat over their wine. Indeed, a very significant look from the last person who left the room conveyed to me the etiquette of the place. I was delighted at this—it was the very opportunity I longed for—and so, with a clink of my knife against my wine-glass, the substitute for a bell in use amongst humble hostels, I summoned the waiter, and asked for his list of wines. I saw that my act had created some astonishment amongst the others, but it excited nothing more, and now they had all lighted their pipes, and sat smoking away quite regardless of my presence. I had ordered a flask of Steinberger at four florins, and given most

special directions that my glass should have a "roped rim," and be of a tender green tint, but not too deep to spoil the colour of the wine.

My admonitions were given aloud, and in a tone of command, but I perceived that they failed to create any impression upon my moulted neighbours. I might have ordered nectar or hypocras for all that they seemed to care about me. I raked up in memory all the impertinent and insolent things Henri Heine had ever said of Austria; I bethought me how they tyrannised in the various provinces of their scattered empire, and how they were hated by Hun, Slavac, and Italian; I revelled in those slashing leading articles that used to show up the great but bankrupt bully, and I only wished I was "own correspondent" to something at home to give my impressions of "Austria and her military system."

Little as you think of that pale sad-looking stranger, who sits sipping his wine in solitude at the foot of the table, that he is about to transmit yourselves and your country to a remote posterity. "Ay!" muttered I, "to be remembered when the Danube will be a choked up rivulet, and the park of Schönbrunn a prairie for the buffalo." I am not exactly aware how or why these changes were to have occurred, but Lord Macaulay's New Zealander might have originated them.

While I thus mused and brooded, the tramp of four horses came clattering down the street, and soon after swept into the arched doorway of the inn with a rolling and thunderous sound.

"Here he comes—here he is at last!" said a young officer, who had rushed in haste to the window, and at the announcement a very palpable sentiment of satisfaction seemed to spread itself through the company, even to the grim old field-marshal, who took his pipe from his mouth to say:

"He is in time—he saves 'arrest!'"

As he spoke, a tall man in uniform entered the room, and walking with military step till he came in front of the general, said, in a loud but respectful voice,

"I have the honour to report myself as returned to duty."

The general replied something I could not catch, and then shook him warmly by the hand, making room for him to sit down next him.

"How far did your royal highness go? Not to Coire?" said the general.

"Far beyond it, sir," said the other. "I went the whole way to the Splügen, and if it were not for the terror of your displeasure, I'd have crossed the mountain and gone on to Chiavenna."

The fact that I was listening to the narrative of a royal personage was not the only bond of fascination to me, for somehow the tone of the speaker's voice sounded familiarly to my ears, and I could have sworn I had heard it before. As he was at the same side of the table with myself, I could not see him, but while he con-

tinued to talk, the impression grew each moment more strong that I must have met him previously.

I could gather—it was easy enough to do so—from the animated looks of the party, and the repeated bursts of laughter that followed his sallies, that the newly-arrived officer was a wit and authority amongst his comrades. His elevated rank, too, may have contributed to this popularity. Must I own that he appeared in the character that to me is particularly offensive? He was a “narrator.” That vulgar adage of “two of a trade” has a far wider acceptance when applied to the operations of intellect than when addressed to the work of men’s hands. To see this jealousy at its height, you must look for it amongst men of letters, artists, actors, or, better still, those social performers who are the bright spirits of dinner-parties—the charming men of society. All the animosities of political or religious hate are mild compared to the detestation this rivalry engenders; and now, though the audience was a foreign one, which I could have no pretension to amuse, I conceived the most bitter dislike for the man who had engaged their attention.

I do not know how it may be with others, but to myself there has always been this difficulty in a foreign language, that until I have accustomed myself to the tone of voice and the manner of a speaker, I can rarely follow him without occasional lapses. Now, on the present occasion, the narrator, though speaking distinctly, and with a good accent, had a very rapid utterance, and it was not till I had familiarised my ear with his manner that I could gather his words correctly. Nor was my difficulty lessened by the fact that, as he pretended to be witty and epigrammatic, frequent bursts of laughter broke from his audience and obscured his speech. He was, as it appeared, giving an account of a fishing excursion he had just taken to one of the small mountain lakes near Poppenheim, and it was clear enough he was one who always could eke an adventure out of even the most ordinary incident of daily life.

This fishing story had really nothing in it, though he strove to make out fifty points of interest or striking situations out of the veriest common-place. At last, however, I saw that, like a practised story-teller, he was hoarding up his great incident for the finish.

“As I have told you,” said he, “I engaged the entire of the little inn for myself; there were but five rooms in it altogether, and though I did not need more than two, I took the rest, that I might be alone and unmolested. Well, it was on my second evening there, as I sat smoking my pipe at the door, and looking over my tackle for the morrow, there came up the glen the strange sound of wheels, and, to my astonishment, a travelling carriage soon appeared, with four horses driven in hand, and I saw in a moment it was a lohnskutscher, who had taken the wrong turning after leaving Ragatz, and mistaken the road, for the highway

ceases about two miles above Poppenheim, and dwindles down to a mere mule-path. Leaving my host to explain the mistake to the travellers, I hastily re-entered the house, just as the carriage drove up. The explanation seemed a very prolix one, for when I looked out of the window, half an hour afterwards, there were the horses still standing at the door, and the driver, with a large branch of alder, whipping away the flies from them, while the host continued to hold his place at the carriage door. At last he entered my room, and said that the travellers, two foreign ladies—he thought them Russians—had taken the wrong road, but that the elder, what between fatigue and fear, was so overcome, that she could not proceed farther, and entreated that they might be afforded any accommodation—mere shelter for the night—rather than retrace their road to Ragatz.

“Well,” said I, carelessly, ‘let them have the rooms on the other side of the hall; so that they only stop for one night, the intrusion will not signify.’ Not a very gracious reply, perhaps, but I did not want to be gracious. The fact was, as the old lady got out, I saw something like an elephant’s leg, in a fur boot, that quite decided me on not making acquaintance with the travellers, and I was rash enough to imagine they must be both alike. Indeed, I was so resolute in maintaining my solitude undisturbed, that I told my host on no account whatever to make me any communication from the strangers, nor, on any pretext, to let me feel that they were lodged under the same roof with myself. Perhaps, if the next day had been one to follow my usual sport, I should have forgotten all about them, but it was one of such rain as made it perfectly impossible to leave the house. I doubt if I ever saw rain like it. It came down in sheets, like water splashed out of buckets, flattening the small trees to the earth, and beating down all the light foliage into the muddy soil beneath; meanwhile the air shook with the noise of the swollen torrents, and all the mountain-streams crashed and thundered away, like great cataracts. Rain can really become grand at such moments, and no more resembling a mere shower than the cry of a single brawler in the street is like the roar of a mighty multitude. It was so fine, that I determined I would go down to a little wooden bridge over the river, whence I could see the stream as it came down, tumbling and splashing, from a cleft in the mountain. I soon dressed myself in all my best waterproofs—hat, cape, boots, and all—and set out. Until I was fully embarked on my expedition I had no notion of the severity of the storm, and it was with considerable difficulty I could make head against the wind and rain together, while the slippery ground made walking an actual labour.

“At last I reached the river, but of the bridge the only trace was a single-beam, which, deeply buried in the bank at one extremity, rose and fell in the surging flood, like the arm of a drowning swimmer. The stream had completely filled the channel, and swept along, with irag-

ments of timber, and even furniture, in its muddy tide; farm produce, and implements too, came floating by, showing what destruction had been effected higher up the river. As I stood gazing on the current, I saw, at a little distance from me, a man, standing motionless beside the river, and apparently lost in thought; so at least he seemed, for though not at all clad in a way to resist the storm, he remained there, wet and soaked through, totally regardless of the weather. On inquiring at the inn, I learned that this was the lohukutscher—the ‘vetturino’—of the travellers, and who, in attempting to ascertain if the stream were fordable, had lost one of his best horses, and barely escaped being carried away himself. Until that, I had forgotten all about the strangers, whom, it now appeared, were close prisoners like myself. While the host was yet speaking, the lohukutscher came up, and in a tone of equality that showed me he thought I was in his own line of business, asked if I would sell him one of my nags then in the stable.

“Not caring to disabuse him of his error regarding my rank, I did not refuse him so flatly as I might, and he pressed the negotiation very warmly in consequence. At last, to get rid of him, I declared that I would not break up my team, and retired into the house. I was not many minutes in my room, when a courier came with a polite message from his mistress, to beg I would speak with her. I went at once, and found an old lady—she was English, as her French bespoke—very well mannered and well bred, who apologised for troubling me, but having heard from her vetturino that my horses were disengaged, and that I might, if not disposed to sell one of them, hire out the entire team, to take their carriage as far as Andeer—By the time she got thus far, I perceived that she, too, mistook me for a lohukutscher. It just struck me what good fun it would be to carry on the joke. To be sure, the lady herself presented no inducement to the enterprise, and as I thus balanced the case, there came into the room one of the prettiest girls I ever saw. She never turned a look towards where I was standing, nor deigned to notice me at all, but passed out of the room as rapidly as she entered; still, I remembered that I had already seen her before, and passed a delightful evening in her company at a little inn in the Black Forest.”

When the narrator had got thus far in his story, I leaned forward to catch a full view of him, and saw, to my surprise, and I own to my misery, that he was the German count we had met at the Titi-See. So overwhelming was this discovery to me, that I heard nothing for many minutes after. All of that wretched scene between us on the last evening at the inn came full to my memory, and I bethought me of lying the whole night on the hard table, fevered with rage and terror alternately. If it were not that

his narrative regarded Miss Herbert now, I would have skulked out of the room and out of the inn, and out of the town itself, never again to come under the insolent stare of those wicked grey eyes, but in that name there was a fascination—not to say that a sense of jealousy burned at my heart like a furnace.

The turmoil of my thoughts lost me a great deal of his story, and might have lost me more, had not the hearty laughter of his comrades recalled me once again to attention.

He was describing how, as a “vetturino,” he drove their carriage with his own spanking grey horses to Coire, and thence to Andeer. He had bargained, it seems, that Miss Herbert should travel outside in the cabriolet, but she failed to keep her pledge, so that they only met at stray moments during the journey. It was in one of these she said laughingly to him,

“Nothing would surprise me less than to learn, some fine morning, that you were a prince in disguise, or a great count of the empire at least. It was only the other day we were honoured with the incognito presence of a royal personage; I do not exactly know who, but Mrs. Keats could tell you. He left us abruptly at Schaffhausen.”

“You can’t mean the creature,” said I, “that I saw in your company at the Titi-See.”

“The same,” said she, rather angrily.

“Why, he is a saltimbanque: I saw him the morning I came through Constance with some others of his troop dragged before the maire for causing a disturbance in a cabaret; one of the most consummate impostors, they told me, in Europe.”

“An infamous falsehood, and a base liar the man who says it,” cried I, springing to my legs, and standing revealed before the company in an attitude of haughty defiance. “I am the person you have dared to defame. I have never assumed to be a prince, and as little am I a rope-dancer. I am an English gentleman travelling for his pleasure, and I hurl back every word you have said of me with contempt and defiance.”

Before I had finished this insolent speech, some half-dozen swords were drawn and brandishing in the air, very eager, as it seemed, to cut me to pieces, and the count himself required all the united strength of the party to save me from his hands. At last, I was pushed, hustled, and dragged out of the room to another smaller one on the same floor, and the key being turned on me, left to my very happy reflections.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND was commenced in May, 1850, and though but eighteen monthly parts have yet been issued, we believe it has now the largest circulation of any similar publication in the world. Yet notwithstanding the wide circulation of the work itself, its columns are more quoted from than from any other publication, and it is probably not an exaggeration to estimate that Mr. Dickens’ new story, “Great Expectations,” will find in this country alone more than three millions of readers.

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